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Interpretation and Edification in Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*

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Interpretation and Edification in Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*

by

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Interpretation and Edification in Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*

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This dissertation approaches Eusebius' *De Vita Constantini* (hereafter *VC*) as a literary work, focusing on the ways in which the concepts of interpretation and moral edification inform the text. In the tradition of Plutarchan biography Eusebius states that he writes for the sake of the reader's moral improvement, but as a Christian theologian he assumes that moral improvement follows spiritual enlightenment. Thus his biography of Constantine not only portrays a virtuous life but interprets what it portrays in order to reveal underlying spiritual truths. This interpretive activity arises from a mental habit that Eusebius shared with others, Christian and non-Christian, in his Platonizing intellectual milieu and that I term "symbolic thought," namely, a view of the material world as a set of signs representing supra-mundane reality.

In Chapter One I examine Eusebius' comparison of Constantine with Moses in *VC* 1 as an example of typology, a comparative interpretive strategy favored by

Christian writers. Typology is often sharply distinguished from allegory in modern theological studies; I argue that both can be forms of symbolic thought, when they are used to direct the reader to a spiritual truth. In Chapter Two I discuss the ways in which Eusebius' idealized portrayal of Constantine conforms to the literary stereotype of the philosopher. I argue that Eusebius viewed *VC* as a whole as a symbolic composition: through the accumulation of mundane details about Constantine, Eusebius claims to give the reader a glimpse of a profoundly spiritual soul. In Chapter Three I argue that Eusebius' writings reveal a positive view of the capacity of the visual arts to function symbolically, despite the tendency of modern scholarship to associate him with iconophobia. I analyze several passages in which Eusebius makes artistic mimesis a significant adjunct to a Platonizing theory of mimetic relationships between the material and spiritual realms, in that he presents products of the visual arts (like *VC* itself, which Eusebius describes as a "verbal portrait" of Constantine) as able both to represent spiritual reality and to assist the viewer in the process of assimilation to the divine.

CONTENTS

PROLOGUE

The *Life of Constantine* is perhaps the last work that Eusebius wrote, at the end of a long and prolific career. Though he may have begun work on it during the emperor's lifetime, it did not take its current shape until after the death of Constantine in 337. Eusebius himself died in 339, leaving *VC* in a basically complete form, though like much of his writing it is not meticulously edited.[1] The authenticity of *VC* was disputed in the past but is now generally accepted. It is a crucial text for the modern student of the Constantinian period, and the authoritative work of T. D. Barnes has demonstrated its usefulness to the historian. It is a difficult text for historians to use, however, in part because it is heavily influenced by panegyric and thus avoids precise details, including most proper names except for Constantine's.[2] More significant is the fact that *VC*'s portrayal of Constantine is obviously stereotyped: Constantine certainly espoused and promoted Christianity with what might be called a sense of mission, but it is not plausible that he was the paragon of virtue that Eusebius depicts.[3] To simply cite the influence of panegyric to explain this fact would be question-begging. Eusebius in *VC* deliberately combined elements of panegyric, moralizing biography, and the document-laden historiography he had used in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* in order to produce not a factual record but an interpretation of Constantine's life and reign. Such a

[1] Barnes 1981, 265.
[2] In Burckhardt's hostile formulation, "Furthermore, to say nothing of the contemptible style, there is a consciously furtive mode of expression, so that the reader finds himself treading concealed traps and bogs at the most vital passages" (Burckhardt 1956, 250).
[3] For Constantine's sense of mission see Barnes 1981, 275, and Baynes 1972.

complex text clearly requires a literary approach: Averil Cameron has characterized *VC* as "a work overcriticized on historical grounds and understudied as a literary text."[4]

This dissertation addresses that imbalance, focusing primarily on the ways in which certain philosophical presuppositions and methods and didactic goals inform the text. Though these questions entail close readings of numerous passages, this is not primarily a formalist study, and I deal with questions of genre only in very broad terms. Analysis of *VC* as a patchwork of passages written according to distinct generic templates has been attempted, with questionable success.[5] Eusebius clearly did not consider himself bound to conform to such templates. Despite its occasional untidiness, *VC* has a basic coherence deriving from the fact that Eusebius constantly has in view two mutally reinforcing goals: interpretation and edification. The interplay of these two goals in the text is the theme of this dissertation. In the tradition of Plutarchan biography, Eusebius states in his prologue that he writes for the moral edification of his readers, and given the intensely moralizing tone of the text it is clear that he keeps this goal in view. But for a Christian theologian like Eusebius, true moral improvement requires spiritual enlightenment. So Eusebius' account of the life of Constantine does double duty: it not only presents a model for virtuous behavior but instructs the reader in what Eusebius understands to be the spiritual significance of what is being narrated, through a continual process of interpretation opening the reader's eyes to a divine power at work in events large and small and in the emperor's very soul.

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[4] Cameron 1991, 53.
[5] Barnes 1989; questioned by Cameron 2000.

This pervasive concern in *VC* with revealing the spiritual meaning of mundane phenomena arises from a basic assumption common to Eusebius and many others, Christian and non-Christian, in the Platonizing intellectual milieu that he inhabited. As an outgrowth of Platonic idealism, the Platonism of the imperial period developed a tendency to view the material world as a set of signs representing an unseen, non-material reality. I call this tendency "symbolic thought"; it is a universalizing approach that sees any material phenomenon as subject to interpretation that will yield deeper truths. The role of the philosopher or teacher who takes this view of the world is to teach his students to find and focus on those truths. Symbolic thought is particularly characteristic of the neo-Platonism of Plotinus, who taught that ascending orders of reality were mimetically linked, so that the "sensible" world was a reflection of the "intelligible" realm, which in turn reflected an ultimate reality that he described as the One. It was also congenial to the spiritualizing world view of the Christians, and it is found in well-developed form already in the writings of the New Testament, for example in a passage in *Hebrews* 8-10 that interprets the tabernacle and other physical aspects of Jewish cult as visible symbols of spiritual reality. It continues as an important component of the writings of the Alexandrian Platonizing theologians Clement and Origen and of their intellectual heir Eusebius.

In Chapter One I outline Eusebius' assumptions with regard to symbolic thought on the basis of statements in his *Praeparatio Evangelica*, an apologetic work written

between 313 and about 318.[6] My concern is to place Eusebius' views in a broader Hellenic context by highlighting the commonalities between his approach and that of the non-Christian thinkers whom he cites (mostly for the purpose of refuting them) in that work. It is important to point out this connection because it indicates that the deployment of symbolic thought was one of the factors that helped to place Christian discourse in the intellectual mainstream in late antiquity.[7] I then go on to examine Eusebius' extended comparison of Constantine and Moses in *VC* 1. This comparison has been correctly identified as an example of typology, an interpretive strategy favored by Christian authors. Due to misconceptions about the nature of typology, however, this identification has tended to hinder understanding of Eusebius' use of the comparison. I argue that typology is one form of symbolic thought among the many that were available to authors attempting to identify a spiritual truth underlying a mundane phenomenon.

Chapter Two is an analysis of *VC* as an adaptation of the philosopher biography. Eusebius, anxious to present Constantine as an ideal of Christian virtue, modeled his portrayal of the emperor on the literary stereotype of the philosopher. In late antiquity the philosopher was generally regarded as the most god-like of men. Christians had already adopted the philosopher image for the portrayal of Christ; in doing likewise for Constantine Eusebius appeals to preconceptions held by Christians and non-Christians alike. Expanding on an idea already advanced by Patricia Cox, I argue that Eusebius'

[6] For the date of *PE*, see Barnes 1981, 178, n.110.
[7] The process by which Christian discourse became the dominant one in late antiquity is the theme of Cameron 1991. See pp. 6-7 *infra* for the influence of Cameron's work on this project.

idealized portrayal of Constantine is connected with his understanding of the *Vita* format as a medium not only for moralizing but for the expression of symbolic thought.[8] Beginning from the Plutarchan notion of biography as the accumulation of small personal details that add up to the portrayal of a person's character, Eusebius adds a spiritual, other-worldly dimension by claiming that such mundane details combine to give the reader a glimpse of a spiritual reality – the soul of Constantine, which, he claims, has reached an advanced level of intimacy with God. Through biography Eusebius provides the authoritative interpretation of Constantine's life in hopes of both opening the reader's eyes to a spiritual reality that he might not otherwise have perceived and inspiring him to moral self-improvement.

In Chapter Three I discuss several of the numerous passages in *VC* in which Eusebius takes a symbolic interpretive approach to products of the visual arts. It is usually assumed that Eusebius and other clergy and theologians of his and earlier periods were iconophobic, or hostile to pictorial art. Clerical iconophobia, however, is difficult to substantiate, and Eusebius' writings show that he took a positive view of the capacity of the visual arts to convey spiritual meaning to the viewer and to contribute to moral improvement. In this respect he again shares common ground with his non-Christian Platonist counterparts, who had a positive understanding of artistic mimesis, connecting it with the metaphysical mimesis that they posited between the various levels of reality, from the material to the purely spiritual. It was Eusebius, however, in

[8] See Cox 1983, xi-xiii.

his speech for the dedication of the rebuilt cathedral at Tyre, included in Book 10 of his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, who first fully developed the idea that the visual arts could be not only a metaphor for but also an aid to the mimetic assimilation of the human soul to the divine. The same line of thought informs several passages in *VC*.

Most of the issues that I address in this dissertation have been succinctly and evocatively discussed by Averil Cameron in her treatment of *VC* in *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*.[9] Cameron draws attention to the prevalence in *VC* of images that are intended to be perceived as laden with spiritual meaning and to the construction of *VC in toto* as such an image. She posits that *VC* in this way exemplifies a basic element of early Christian discourse: "The proclamation of the message was achieved by a technique of presenting the audience with a series of images through which it was thought possible to perceive an objective and higher truth."[10] The writing of *Vitae*, according to Cameron, was a natural choice for Christian authors, in that it had the potential to create a mimetic link between the spiritual realm and the ordinary Christian through the creation of an image of a holy life.[11] The ever-present conviction in early Christian writing that images, or signs, could point to referents with a non-material but very real existence – in my terms, its persistent tendency toward symbolic thought – was, in Cameron's view, one of the secrets of its success.

> Consciousness of the referential quality of Christian language carried several powerful advantages for the Christian preacher and writer. He could claim that true wisdom lay in the Christian message, even if it needed elucidation...; not

[9] Cameron 1991, 53-65.
[10] Cameron 1991, 57.
[11] Cameron 1991, 56-57.

> only that, the correct interpretation of that message would become a matter of authority. Finally, since a potential higher reference was now claimed a fortiori for all language and all rhetoric, not just the specifically Christian, it would be open for him to achieve a totalizing interpretation in which secular discourse could be subsumed and brought within the universal Christian interpretative field. The figural quality of Christian discourse, and the theory of reference on which it rested, were major enabling factors in its development toward a totalizing discourse.[12]

It is quite likely, as Cameron implies elsewhere, that the conversion of Constantine and his promotion of Christianity would not have been sufficient to bring the religion to the dominant position it acquired without the development of this totalizing Christian discourse that co-opted so much of traditional culture but refused to compromise on ultimate interpretations.[13] *VC*, in telling the story of the former, provides a case study of the latter. My goal in what follows is to show in some detail how Eusebius, working with methods and presuppositions that were for the most part quite traditional, creates images in which he finds a distinctly Christian meaning.

[12] Cameron 1991, 57-58.
[13] Cameron 1991, 24.

CHAPTER ONE

Moses and Meaning

In two substantial passages in Book 1 of *Vita Constantini*, Eusebius compares Constantine to Moses (*VC* 1.12 and 1.38). The comparison has an obvious encomiastic function, but it is more complex than a standard rhetorical *synkrisis*. The purpose of the Moses comparison is not only to praise Constantine but to illustrate a spiritual truth, namely that divine justice is in the hands of the Christian god. It is thus a variant on a particular interpretive and compositional strategy common in Christian literature and usually referred to as "typology," which in its most common form compares a New Testament phenomenon with an Old Testament one.[1] A wider view reveals that the Moses comparison also has much in common with the efforts of various Hellenic authors to discern deeper truths behind the myths and cult practices of Mediterranean religions. Eusebius in his *Praeparatio Evangelica* responds to this ongoing effort to interpret traditional religious material according to the doctrines of the philosophical schools. He disapproves of attempts to find anything redeeming in pagan myth, which for him is incapable of carrying useful spiritual meaning. But it is nonetheless the case that he employs, on material that he considers fruitful, the same types of methods as some of the authors whose interpretations of myth he explicitly discounts in *PE*. The

[1] See pp.39-43 *infra* for a more complete discussion with bibliography.

affinity between his goals and methods and those of the Platonizing authors Plutarch and Porphyry is particularly strong. Despite very real differences, Christian and non-Christian Platonists shared a tendency toward what may be called symbolic thought, a view of the phenomena of the material world as so many signs pointing to a supra-mundane reality. Correct interpretation of these signs was a matter for the expert – the philosopher or theologian, as the case might be. But the premise that such interpretation was possible and desirable was taken for granted.

A still wider view reveals that the approach to religion taken by these authors and by Eusebius, an approach that is at once comparatist and symbolic, can be situated in the Hellenic tradition of universal historiography, which sought to document all of Mediterranean and Near Eastern history and culture partly for the sake of finding commonalities between cultures that could serve as a basis for philosophical speculation. The choice of Moses as a counterpart to Constantine is in itself a nod to this school of thought: in the context of the search for a common culture, Moses had come to be viewed by some Hellenic scholars as one of the traditional sage-like founding fathers of the Mediterranean world. After a discussion of Eusebius' approach to symbolic interpretation in general I will examine the methodology of the Moses comparison in *VC* in the light of these broader issues, in an effort to bring a new perspective not only to these passages in *VC* but to the interpretive category of typology.

The remainder of Part One will discuss the interpretation that Eusebius supplies for this particular typology: the success of Moses and Constantine, and the concomitant failure of their opponents, are the products of divine justice. Moses and Constantine prevail because they are God's friends; Pharaoh and Maxentius fail because they are his enemies. This concept was deployed for apologetic ends by the Latin author Lactantius in his *De Mortibus Persecutorum* in the period shortly after the Battle of the Milvian Bridge; it also appears in the second edition of his *Institutiones Divinae*. Lactantius was associated with the court of Constantine at Trier during the second decade of the fourth century, and it was very likely due to his influence that Constantine included in an official document of the year 324 the argument that the defeat of the persecutors should persuade people of the truth of the Christian message.[2] Eusebius likewise has his reader's spiritual enlightenment in view. In several key passages he points the reader toward the conclusion, on the basis of the events of recent history, that it is the Christian god who is the dispenser of divine retribution and reward; and he sets up Constantine as a model for the reader of *VC* by making the discovery of this line of reasoning the basis of his conversion to Christianity in 312.

[2] The document is the "Letter to the Provincials of the East," *VC* 2.48-60. On Lactantius' association with Constantine's court and the probable influence of his writings on Constantine's thought, see Digeser 2000, 133-135, and Evans-Grubbs 1995, 30-32.

Eusebius and Symbolic Thought

In Eusebius' day there was a well-established practice of studying the myths and cult practices of traditional religion to discern meanings that were not readily apparent.[3] Such interpretation, which often reflected the ideas taught by the various schools of philosophy, was generally understood by the ancients as the uncovering of meanings that were intentionally embedded in the original artifacts, which might be poems, statues, temples, or simply the names of the gods, by their authors or inventors.[4] Authors who imbedded hidden meanings in literary works were said to speak allegorically (ἀλληγορεῖν), which several ancient commentators define explicitly as "saying one thing and meaning another."[5] Other terms that were used synonymously include αἰνίττεσθαι, τροπολογεῖν, and ὑπονοεῖν – to communicate in riddles, in figures, or with underlying meanings. The process is usually described in English as "allegorical composition." The process of discerning these embedded meanings was also described as ἀλληγορεῖν or ἀλληγορία, which when used in this sense can be translated as "allegorical interpretation." It should be noted that "allegorical" in these expressions, like ἀλληγορεῖν and its synonyms, has a very general application, not limited to narratives of the *Pilgrim's Progress* or *Psychomachia* type or even to narrative at all. It denotes a symbolic mode of thought or expression that may take a

[3] Pépin 1958 is still the classic treatment of this topic. Lamberton 1986 is an excellent study of allegorical interpretation of Homer; Dawson 1992 analyzes the use of allegory by Philo, the gnostic author Valentinus, and Clement of Alexandria.
[4] See Lamberton 1986, 20, and Russell 1981, 96-97.
[5] Pépin 1958, 87-89, gives references for the definition and a brief discussion of the terminology in general.

variety of forms. When discussing the hidden meanings of non-literary artifacts ancient commentators use some of these same terms, and the process of self-consciously symbolic composition that they envision and the meanings that they discern are essentially the same as when they discuss literary texts.[6] There are some situations in which the line between composition and interpretation is blurred: for example, according to Plutarch the Pythagoreans discerned "the riddle of the divine" (αἴνιγμα τοῦ θείου) in numbers and geometrical figures and reflected these meanings in the names they gave to the numbers and figures, which Plutarch proceeds to explicate (*De Iside* 381f – 382a). Similarly, he says that the Egyptians call iron "the bone of Typhon" and lodestone "the bone of Horus," because the interaction of lodestone and iron reflects a certain cosmic interaction that is also reflected in the myths about these gods (*De Iside* 376b-c). In these examples interpretation of an intellectual or natural phenomenon leads to an act of significant naming, which is then interpreted by the latter-day commentator. Each step in the process involves the sort of symbolic thinking that is usually called "allegorical."[7]

[6] Porphyry in his *De Cultu Simulacrorum*, the text cited by Eusebius that will be discussed below, juxtaposes allegorical interpretation of statues and allegorical interpretation of texts in an unproblematic way. He prefers the terms σύμβολον and σημεῖον to describe the way in which statues of the gods convey meanings, but he also uses αἰνιττόμενοι (*PE* 3.11.41) and ἑρμηνεύειν (*PE* 3.11.46), terms that are typical of textual exegesis. Plutarch in *De Iside et Osiride* says that the inventors of the sistrum "indicate in riddles" (αἰνιττόμενοι) birth and death through the depiction on it of Isis and Nephthys (*De Iside* 376e).

[7] See Dawson 1992, 4, and ch. 3, esp. pp. 129-31, on another form of blurring the line between composition and interpretation, namely when a text interpreting another text is in itself an allegorical composition.

The Evidence of Praeparatio Evangelica

In Books 2 and 3 of his *Praeparatio Evangelica*, a work of apologetics in fifteen books written between 313 and about 318, Eusebius sets out his view of the practice of allegorical interpretation of the mythology and cult practice of traditional Greek, Egyptian, and Phoenician religion.[8] The context is a larger discussion, occupying Books 1-6, of traditional religion; Eusebius' stated goal is to justify the abandonment by Christians of the religion of their ancestors. He distinguishes three types of religion (θεολογία): mythical or historical (he prefers the latter term), physical or speculative, and political (*PE* 4.1.2); the last one, which has mainly to do with divination, does not concern us here.[9] His category of mythical religion comprises pagan cult practice and myth, while physical or speculative religion is the body of allegorical interpretation that is secondary to this material. Unlike the allegorizing interpreters to whom he responds, Eusebius denies that mythical religion has any inherent allegorical meaning.

The basis of Eusebius' argument against both mythical and speculative religion is euhemerism, for which his authorities are Philo Byblios (whom he cites from Porphyry), Diodorus Siculus, and Clement of Alexandria. After copying with minimal commentary long passages by these authors that take a euhemerist approach to the

[8] See Pépin 1958, 387-92, for a summary of Eusebius' argument and its relationship to the ideas of Augustine on the same subject.

[9] This tripartite division of religion is also made by Tertullian and Augustine, who cite Varro as their authority. Eusebius mentions anonymous Greek authorities. He may have found the tripartite division in Plutarch's *Dialogue on Eros* or in Dio Chrysostom's twelfth discourse, *On the Origin of the Notion of God*, or in Aeetius' *Placita*; Pépin posits a Stoic source on whom these Greek authors and Varro depend. See Pépin 1958, 276-307.

origins of Phoenician, Egyptian, and Greek mythology, he takes it as proven that Christians are justified in abandoning traditional mythology:

> With good reason then do we assert that we have been set free from all these things and have been redeemed from the ancient error as if from a terrible and burdensome disease. Our redemption is first by the grace and kindness of almighty God, secondly by the ineffable power of the gospel teaching of our savior, and thirdly by sound reasoning, in that we consider it unholy and impious to honor with the august name of God mortal men who have long been lying among the dead, and have not even left a record of themselves as virtuous men, but have handed down examples of extreme licentiousness, self-indulgence, cruelty, and madness for those who come after them to follow.[10]

Eusebius then acknowledges that straightforward belief in the myths has already been rejected by many, or as he says, by "the majority even of the most superstitious," καὶ αὐτῶν ἤδη τῶν σφόδρα δεισιδαιμόνων οἱ πλείους (*PE* 2.4.4). Some have rejected the myths entirely; others have turned to allegorical interpretation. He deals with the first group, represented by Plato and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, in the remainder of Book 2, and devotes all of Book 3 to showing where the allegorizers have gone wrong.[11]

Eusebius distinguishes two types of allegorical interpretation. The first is purely materialist, in that it makes the elements of religion correspond to celestial bodies,

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[10] Εἰκότως δῆτα ἡμεῖς τούτων ἁπάντων ἐλευθέρους ἡμᾶς γενέσθαι ὁμολογοῦμεν, τῆς μὲν μακρᾶς καὶ πεπαλαιωμένης πλάνης ὥσπερ τινὸς δεινῆς καὶ χαλεπωτάτης νόσου λελυτρωμένοι, πρῶτα μὲν τῇ τοῦ πανατοκράτορος θεοῦ χάριτι καὶ εὐεργεσίᾳ δεύτερον δὲ ἀπορρήτῳ δυνάμει τῆς τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν εὐαγγελικᾶς διδασκαλίας, καὶ τρίτον σώφρονι λογισμῷ κρίναντες ἀνόσιον εἶναι καὶ δυσσεβὲς τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ σεβασμίῳ προσηγορίᾳ τιμᾶν τοὺς πάλαι ἐν νεκροῖς κειμένους θνητοὺς ἄνδρας καὶ οὐδὲ σωφρόνων ἀνδρῶν μνήμην ἀπολελοιπότας, ἐσχάτης δὲ ἀκρασίας καὶ ἀκολασίας ὠμότητός τε καὶ φρενοβλαβείας δείγματα τοῖς μετ' αὐτοὺς φυλάττειν παραδεδωκότας. (*PE* 2.4.1. *Translations are my own except where noted.*)

[11] Eusebius cites *Republic* 2.377e-378d, where Socrates says that stories of the gods' misbehavior must be suppressed in the hypothetical city, "whether they are composed with or without deeper meanings" (οὔτ' ἐν ὑπονοίαις πεποιημένας οὔτε ἄνεω ὑπονοιῶν, 378d), to prove that Plato disapproved of both the mythical and the speculative categories of religion (*PE* 2.7.3-8). He cites Dionysius of Halicarnassus 2.18, in which Dionysius expresses his preference for the non-narrative religion of the Romans because unlike Greek religion it poses no moral danger to the unphilosophical multitudes (*PE* 2.7.9-8.13).

geographical features, the four elements, and so on; this he views as completely wrong-headed. The second, with which he has more sympathy, attempts to relate traditional religion to Platonic concepts about non-material entities. In fact he creates a false distinction: the former approach was developed by the Stoics, but it was adopted by Platonizing writers on allegory from at least the time of Philo along with their distinctively Platonist approach, so it would be impossible for Eusebius to find a text or author committed to the second approach to the exclusion of the former.[12] As examples of materialist allegorical interpretation Eusebius cites passages from Ps.-Plutarch, *De Daedalis Plataeensibus*, from Diodorus Siculus, from Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride*, and from Porphyry's *Epistula ad Anebonem* and *De Abstinentia*. He finds fault with these authors in the first place for inconsistency, in that they record a variety of interpretations that he assumes to be mutually exclusive: how can Hera symbolize marriage and water and earth simultaneously (*PE* 3.2.2)? His second line of attack is to recall that the gods are merely dead men and women, whom it is simply absurd and erroneous to equate with great cosmic forces. Instead of applying a forced allegory to deceitful myths, the interpreters might as well have rejected the myths and returned to straightforward worship of celestial bodies, which Eusebius takes to have been the

[12] This eclecticism is typical of middle and neo-Platonism generally. As Lamberton (1986) says of the second-century C.E. *De Vita et Poesi Homeri*, attributed to Plutarch, "Working in a heterogeneous tradition that doubtless owed much to the Stoa, the author of the *Life* embraces a variety of doctrines and explicitly rejects very few. What we see at work in this text is the process by which Platonizing litterateurs of late antiquity – Plutarch himself is an excellent example – incorporated much of the philosophical tradition into a matrix compatible with the thought of the successors of Plato in the Academy" (p.41). See also Lamberton 1986, 25-26, and 45ff. on Philo. See Merlan 1967, 124, 129, on Stoic pantheism and its appeal for the Neoplatonists. Dawson 1992, 24-38, discusses the Stoic philosopher Cornutus' work on allegory; see Most 1989 for a more general discussion of Stoic allegory.

original religion practiced by Mediterranean societies (except for the Jews and their ancestors) before they began to deify their dead rulers (see *PE* 3.3.17, 1.6.1-3). He then sets aside the euhemerist claim and grants, for the sake of argument, that the deities of mythology do have a real connection with the forces of the cosmos. Even so, such religion would still be false in that it would teach people to worship the creation rather than the creator (*PE* 3.6.2-4). Christianity, on the other hand, teaches us "not to be over-awed at the visible parts of the cosmos and at all that can be perceived by the physical senses, because it is of a perishable nature, but to worship the invisible mind that is in all of these things and that creates it in its entirety and all its parts...."[13]

Eusebius then turns to the second group of allegorizing interpreters, those of his own time who make the same claims for myth as Eusebius has just made for Christianity, namely that it represents a purely spiritual reality. Though he obviously approves of the fact that these interpreters accept Platonic doctrines of a νοῦς δημιουργός and of the ideas, he is clearly hostile to their project of illustrating these doctrines through pagan myth (*PE* 3.6.7). The only representative of this class of thinkers to whom he makes explicit reference is Porphyry: he cites a long passage from *De Cultu Simulacrorum* in which Porphyry attempts to show that the makers even of very ancient statues of the gods designed them according to allegorical principles to reveal the transcendent nature of the gods, using marble or ivory, for instance, to show their similarity to light or black marble to show their invisibility, and making them in

[13] ...μέρη τε τοῦ κόσμου τὰ ὁρώμενα καὶ πᾶν τὸ καταληπτὸν σαρκὸς αἰσθήσει, ὡς ἂν τῆς φθαρτῆς ὄντα φύσεως, οὐδαμῶς καταπλήττεσθαι, τὸν δ' ἐν τούτοις ἅπασιν ἀόρατον καὶ τῶν καθόλου τε καὶ κατὰ μέρος δημιουργικὸν νοῦν μόνον ἀποθαυμάζειν... (*PE* 3.6.6).

the shape of men to show their rational mind. To complement his discussion of statues Porphyry cites and comments on 32 lines of an Orphic hymn to Zeus. Porphyry suggests that the hymn shows that the ancients understood Zeus as the νοῦς δημιουργικός (*PE* 3.9.1, 5), a Platonic concept that would have been familiar to Eusebius from *Timaeus*; on the strength of this, Eusebius assumes that Porphyry intends to interpret any references to the gods as referring to purely spiritual entities. Since Porphyry's interpretation includes many elements typical of Stoic allegorical interpretation – equating Hera with air, for instance (*PE* 3.11.1) – Eusebius is then able to claim that Porphyry contradicts himself. Though Porphyry says that he will show that the ancient gods represent the transcendent creator of the universe, he fails, according to Eusebius, and ends up describing a god who is part of the universe and thus cannot be its creator (*PE* 3.10.1-4).

Porphyry's interpretive failure was inevitable, in Eusebius' view, because of the material he was interpreting. None of the artifacts of traditional religion can be made to yield a purely spiritual understanding of the divine, because no one in the cultures that produced them was capable of such an understanding. In Eusebius' view of religious history, the Jews were the only ancient culture that understood the spiritual nature of God; in recent times, the truth that they had known all along was discovered or plagiarized by Plato and other Greek philosophers. But the traditional religions of the Greeks, Egyptians, and Phoenicians reflected a view of the gods as merely material (*PE* 2.6.11-21; 10.1.1ff.). Eusebius, taking for granted the standard assumption that

allegorical interpretation depends on allegorical composition, believes that he can discredit any Platonizing interpretation of the artifacts of traditional religion by proving (as he claimed to do in *PE* 1) that the creators of those artifacts were incapable of a transcendent view of the divine.

Hebrew scripture, on the other hand, having been written by people who understood the purely spiritual nature of God, is ripe for Platonizing interpretation, and in fact *PE* 11-12 are devoted to the mutual elucidation of Platonic and biblical texts.[14] The Platonic concepts of the One, the second cause, the immortality of the soul, and the ideas are all alleged to have been already discovered and allegorically written into the text by Moses and the other authors of scripture. Thus when Eusebius objects to the anthropomorphism of Porphyry's Orphic poem, which equates the mind of Zeus with the ether, his shoulders with the air, his belly with the earth, and so on, there is no inconsistency in his offering an example of acceptable anthropomorphism from scripture:

> But if it is necessary to cite a precedent, the sacred word, in a way that is more worthy of God and has more affinity with the truth, has somewhere announced: "The heaven is my throne and the earth my footstool." If it was really necessary to personify God with a somewhat human expression, see how different the theology is.[15]

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[14] This approach to scripture had first been taken by the Ptolemaic Jewish scholars Aristaeus and Aristobulus and developed by Philo and, to a lesser extent, Josephus. Eusebius in *PE* 8 cites long extracts from these writers in order to establish them as authorities for his project. Philo's exegetical method had already been appropriated by Clement of Alexandria and Origen. See Chadwick 1967, esp. pp.156-7, 179-80, 183. For a more detailed study of the allegorical exegesis of Philo and Clement see Dawson 1992, chs. 1 and 3.

[15] ἀλλ' εἰ δεῖ παραδείγματι χρήσασθαι, θεοπρεπέστερον καὶ ἀληθείας οἰκείως ὁ ἱερός που λόγος ἐξεφώνησεν· "ὁ οὐρανός μοι θρόνος," εἰπών, "ἡ δὲ γῆ ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν μου." εἰ γὰρ χρῆν ὅλως προσωποποιεῖν ἀνθρωπινωτέρῳ λόγῳ, θέα τὸ διάφορον τῆς θεολογίας (*PE* 3.10.6-7).

Eusebius explains that the biblical metaphor is acceptable because it describes a god who is separate from creation, unlike the Orphic hymn.

Eusebius thus reveals even in the key passage in which he attempts to discredit pagan allegorizing that he is not hostile to allegory *per se*, and he acknowledges that he shares common cause with Platonist interpreters of myth when their goal is to show the transcendence of the divine. But toward the end of *PE* 3 an important reason emerges for his profound hostility to these Platonists' approach to myth. In a word, they are irresponsible. Knowing what they do about the nature of the divine, pagan philosophers ought to completely reject all of popular religion, but instead they dignify it with their philosophical interpretations and even continue to engage in traditional cult practices (*PE* 3.13.22-14.1). Instead of writing speculative literature for each other, Platonist philosophers should be teaching Platonist doctrines to ordinary people in plain language and working to convert people away from traditional religion.

> Having been set free from all these things as from the bonds of error, these wise star-gazers ought to share their physical speculations with all men ungrudgingly, preaching as straightforwardly as possible to all that they should adore not created phenomena but only their invisible creator and should worship his invisible and incorporeal powers in invisible and incorporeal ways, not by lighting fires or sacrificing a ram or a bull, and not thinking to honor the divine with garlands and statues and the building of temples, but with purified thoughts and correct and true opinions, with a calm soul imitating his virtue as much as possible.[16]

[16] τούτων δὲ ἁπάντων, ὡς ἂν πλάνης δεσμῶν ἀπολυθέντας, χρῆν δήπου τοὺς σοφοὺς καὶ μετεωρολέσχας πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις τῆς φυσικῆς θεωρίας ἀφθόνως κοινωνεῖν, μονονουχὶ γυμνῶς προκηρύττοντας ἅπασι μὴ τὰ φαινόμενα, τὸν δ' ἀφανῆ δημιουργὸν τῶν φαινομένων μόνον ἀποθαυμάζειν καὶ τὰς ἀοράτους αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀσωμάτους δυνάμεις ἀοράτως καὶ ἀσωμάτως θρησκεύειν, οὐ πῦρ ἅψαντας οὐδέ γε κριὸν καὶ ταῦρον θυσαμένους, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ στεφάνοις καὶ ξοάνοις καὶ ναῶν ἀνοικοδομαῖς τὸ θεῖον τιμᾶν οἰομένους, λογισμοῖς δὲ κεκαθαρμένοις καὶ δόγμασιν ὀρθοῖς καὶ ἀληθέσι τοῦτο πράττοντας, ἐν ἀπαθείᾳ ψυχῆς καὶ τῇ πρὸς αὐτὸν κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν τῆς ἀρετῆς ὁμοιώσει (*PE* 3.13.24).

Platonist interpreters of myth, according to Eusebius, promote traditional religion on the basis of false interpretation when they should instead offer an edifying message of monotheism.

Eusebius' Affinity with Platonist Interpreters of Myth

The only example of Platonizing interpretation of myth that Eusebius gives in *PE* 3 is from Porphyry's *De Cultu Simulacrorum*; he might also have referred to Porphyry's *De Antro Nympharum*, an essay devoted to allegorical interpretation of the Ithacan cave of *Odyssey* 13.[17] And though he cites Plutarch several times in Books 1-3, he does not refer to him here as a Platonizing interpreter of myth, though in fact several of Plutarch's essays are devoted to Platonizing interpretation of traditional religion. Eusebius was aware of this aspect of Plutarch's work: he quotes a passage from *De E apud Delphos* in Book 11, where his concern is to illustrate correspondences between Platonist writings and scripture (*PE* 11.11). Plutarch is one of the Hellenic authors Eusebius knew fairly well: he cites Plutarch (or Ps.-Plutarch) 38 times in *PE*.[18] Though he cites Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride* in his discussion of allegorizing in *PE* 3, he does not acknowledge that the basic assumptions of that work are Platonizing; instead he cites a brief passage that he takes as evidence for euhemerism (*PE* 3.3.16 = *De Iside*

[17] It may be that Eusebius avoids this text because it makes the clear distinction between the material cosmos (represented by the cave) and the transcendent deity (represented by the olive tree above the cave) that Eusebius, to his satisfaction, finds lacking in *De Cultu Simulacrorum*. See Lamberton 1986, 119-32, for an excellent treatment of *De Antro Nympharum*.

[18] See the Stellenregister in Mras's edition of *PE*. Of authors whom Eusebius cites directly Plato is the most frequently cited, followed at a distance by Porphyry and Diodorus Siculus, then by Plutarch.

359e) and an example of Stoic allegory that Plutarch himself describes as characteristic of "the simplest of those who are thought to speak in a more philosophical way."[19] But in fact *De Iside et Osiride* gives a particularly clear picture of Platonizing allegorical interpretation; an examination of Plutarch's method in that text will allow us to observe a sort of "family resemblance" between Eusebius and the non-Christian middle Platonists. The question is not one of direct borrowing from one text by another but of identifying commonalities in a broad intellectual milieu.

In *De Iside et Osiride*, a treatise addressed to Clea, a priestess at Delphi who is also a devotee of Isis, Plutarch records various versions of the set of myths involving Isis, Osiris, Horus, and Typhon, referring to parallels in Greek and other mythologies and discussing possible reasons for the similarities. He then describes and evaluates various interpretations. The euhemerist interpretation he rejects; the stoicizing approach, which equates the gods with various natural phenomena, he finds somewhat more sophisticated.[20] He enumerates many such interpretations, which he insists can be understood on a spiritual as well as a merely physical level, if the gods are not said simply to represent the earth, the seed, the rain, and so on, but rather the divine forces at work behind these natural phenomena. If we say that Isis represents the fruitful earth, according to Plutarch, we miss the truth that there is a divine generative force that makes the earth fruitful; it is this divine force that Isis (and her counterparts in other religions) should be considered to represent (*De Iside* 376f-378a).

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[19] ...τῶν φιλοσοφώτερόν τι λέγειν δοκούντων τοὺς ἁπλουστάτους... (*PE* 3.3.11 = *De Iside* 363d).
[20] See Pépin 1958, 181-84, on Plutarch's ambivalent attitude to stoicizing allegory.

The interpretations that Plutarch particularly advocates are those that assume the existence in the universe of opposing divine forces of generation and destruction, or good and evil, which are at war with each other in the physical world and in the human soul. Though the good force is stronger it can never eliminate the evil. This is a cause for mourning at times but not for despair (*De Iside* 371a). The good force is represented in the myths by Osiris and the evil force by Typhon, who kills and dismembers Osiris and is then vanquished by Horus and set free by Isis, to return for further battles. The multiplicity of myths requires a fair amount of flexibility in the application of this hermeneutic key, but the interpretations that Plutarch approves reflect his belief in the struggle between divine forces of good and evil. He finds the same message in non-narrative aspects of religion, such as rites that involve mourning and temples that have underground rooms (*De Iside* 359a).

Much of *De Iside* deals with interpretations of the myths that relate to the physical world, but the interpretations that seem to matter most to Plutarch are the ethical ones. His enumeration of the ways in which the various religions and philosophical schools approximate the truth of the warring deities culminates with a summary of the theology of Plato's *Laws*, which posits three deities, one good, one opposed to the good, and an intermediate one that is affected by the other two but longs for and pursues the good. He says that his aim for the treatise is "to reconcile the

religion of the Egyptians with this philosophy in particular."[21] The reference to "longing for" the good is a clear signal of the standard Platonic ethical model, best known from the *Symposium*, of the philosopher's intense pursuit of knowledge of a reality beyond sense perception, the aspect of Platonism that became such a preoccupation of the later Platonists and contributed to medieval mysticism.

In his quest for philosophical meaning behind religion, Plutarch is careful not to allow philosophy to displace religion. Plutarch approves of "the reverence and faith implanted in nearly everyone from birth," τιμὴν καὶ πίστιν ὀλίγου δεῖν ἅπασιν ἐκ προώτης γενέσεως ἐνδεδυκυῖαν, and is opposed to any attempt to rationalize it away (*Isis and Osiris* 360a). Philosophical knowledge about the divine forces at work in the soul and the universe is the ultimate goal, but it seems that Plutarch values devout religious practice as an aid to such knowledge not only for the philosophically immature but for the more advanced as well, based on his advice to Clea and his own life-long devotion to the cult of Apollo. On the other hand, the mistake of rationalizing or abandoning religion has a counterpart in the error of superstition, δεισιδαιμονία. In *De Iside* this term is associated with a too literal, too narrow view of religion, which we might call fundamentalism. Plutarch warns Clea against literal belief in the myths: "So whenever you hear the myths the Egyptians tell about the gods – wanderings,

[21] ...τοῦ λόγου τὴν Αἰγυπτίων θεολογίαν μάλιστα ταύτῃ τῇ φιλοσοφίᾳ συνοικειοῦντος (*De Iside* 371a). Daniel Richter, who in a recent article (Richter, 2001) argues that Plutarch's approach is highly Hellenocentric in various ways, might have cited this passage. Richter's point is worth making; it is also not particularly surprising. Plutarch was a Platonist, and we should expect his "universal truth" to be Platonic. The adherents of the common culture theory (see below), whether Jewish, Christian, or Hellenic, were generally partial to their own culture, though not always unabashedly so. See Mortley 1996, ch. 3 and 4, especially pp. 80-81 and 98-99.

dismemberments, and many similar experiences – remember what has already been said and don't believe that any of these things that they say actually happened in that way."[22] The stories of the gods require interpretation if their true, and truly religious, meaning is to be grasped:

> By listening to the stories of the gods in this way, accepting them from those who interpret the myth in a way that is sacred and philosophical, and by performing the established cult rituals with the understanding that what is most pleasing to the gods is not our sacrifices or any other actions but our correct opinions about them, you may avoid superstition, which is just as great an evil as atheism.[23]

The middle way that Plutarch recommends for Clea between superstition and atheism is that she practice religion in the traditional way while understanding the true philosophical meaning of her practice.

Plutarch bases his opposition to superstition on the relativistic idea that while different names and cult practices have arisen among the different peoples, they all describe the same gods. "The majority and the wisest of men hold this opinion: they either believe that there are two gods who are essentially rivals, the one the creator of good things and the other of evil; or they call the better one a god and the other a demon."[24] Having made this claim, Plutarch illustrates it with a fairly lengthy analysis

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[22] Ὅταν οὖν ἃ μυθολογοῦσιν Αἰγύπτιοι περὶ τῶν θεῶν ἀκούσῃς, πλάνας καὶ διαμελισμοὺς καὶ πολλὰ τοιαῦτα παθήματα, δεῖ τῶν προειρημένων μνημονεύειν καὶ μηδὲν οἴεσθαι τούτων λέγεσθαι γεγονὸς οὕτω καὶ πεπραγμένον (*De Iside* 355b).

[23] οὕτω δὴ τὰ περὶ θεῶν ἀκούσασα καὶ δεχομένη παρὰ τῶν ἐξηγουμένων τὸν μῦθον ὁσίως καὶ φιλοσόφως, καὶ δρῶσα μὲν ἀεὶ καὶ διαφυλάττουσα τῶν ἱερῶν τὰ νενομισμένα, τοῦ δ' ἀληθῆ δόξαν ἔχειν περὶ θεῶν μηδὲν οἰομένη μᾶλλον αὐτοῖς μήτε θύσειν μήτε ποιήσειν κεχαρισμένον, οὐδὲν ἂν ἔλαττον ἀποφεύγοιο κακὸν ἀθεότητος δεισιδαιμονίαν (*De Iside* 355c-d).

[24] Καὶ δοκεῖ τοῦτο τοῖς πλείστοις καὶ σοφωτάτοις· νομίζουσι γὰρ οἱ μὲν θεοὺς εἶναι δύο καθάπερ ἀντιτέχνους, τὸν μὲν ἀγαθῶν, τὸν δὲ φαύλων δημιουργόν, οἱ δὲ τὸν μὲν ἀμείνονα θεόν, τὸν δ' ἕτερον δαίμονα καλοῦσιν (*De Iside* 369d). See also *De Iside* 377f-378a.

of Persian religion, followed by quick references to Chaldean and Greek religion and to Greek philosophy, in particular the teachings of Heracleitus, Empedocles, Pythagoras, and Plato (*De Iside* 369-371). Plutarch posits a basic human capacity for perceiving the truth about the divine; superstition consists in a narrow focus on one's own religion as the repository of truth. (He does not say whether the various philosophical schools are prone to the same narrow-mindedness.)

For Plutarch, allegorical interpretation, in the broad sense of the discernment and elucidation of hidden meanings, can be applied to a wide range of phenomena. Not only myths of various cultures, but rituals and the physical appurtenances of religious cult reflect spiritual meaning; so do geometry and the workings of the physical cosmos.[25] It is possible to be led astray, however: Plutarch refers to a few myths that are false and have no connection with spiritual reality (*De Iside* 358e). Gathering, evaluating, and interpreting all of this evidence is work for a philosophically advanced scholar.

Plutarch's approach is typical of a general trend of post-classical Greek thought that saw historical and cultural research as the basis for philosophical speculation. Diodorus Siculus and other authors of universal history had taken up the Peripatetic idea that philosophy must be based in research and attempted to chronicle the entire history of the cultures of the Mediterranean, synthesizing vast amounts of data in order

[25] See *De Iside* 373d-374a: the destructive force associated with Typhon causes earthquakes, storms, lunar eclipses, etc., and the 3-4-5 triangle represents the relationship of Osiris, Isis and Horus.

to understand the relationships of the cultures to one another.[26] A major presupposition of the universal historians was that there was a shared culture in the Mediterranean world that transcended ethnic boundaries, what one scholar calls the "common culture theory."[27] Various theories were posited to explain how this common culture had come to be found in different places. Establishing the relative ages of the cultures was an important part of this sleuthing work: it was generally acknowledged that the Egyptian and Phoenician cultures were the oldest. Typical explanations for cultural commonalities involved a traveling sage: it was often posited, for instance, that Plato and other Greek thinkers learned their philosophy while traveling in Egypt.[28] Universal historians had a profound respect for tradition, especially the ancient religious traditions. (Eusebius appeals to this respect in *PE*, which bases its argument for the superiority of Christianity in part on the antiquity of the Hebrew tradition from which it derives; he compiled his massive *Chronicle* with the main goal of bolstering this argument.[29]) *De Iside* is a philosophical application of the common culture theory, a search for universal truth behind diverse religious systems. It is not, however,

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[26] See Mortley 1996, 83: "A second interesting feature of Diodorus' writing is his view of history: it is the mother of philosophy (1.2.2). We have observed with Theopompus and Dionysius of Halicarnassus this link between history and philosophy, and it does a great deal to explain much of the discourse of late antiquity. History provides the social and anthropological data which enables the kind of analysis of culture which we find from Plutarch's *Moralia* to Clement's *Stromateis* and to Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica*." See Plutarch's description of the project in which Cleombrotus of Sparta, a character in his *De Defectu Oraculorum*, was engaged: "he was compiling a history to serve as the data for a philosophy, which had as its goal a theology, as he himself called it," συνῆγεν ἱστορίαν οἷον ὕλην φιλοσοφίας θεολογίαν ὥσπερ αὐτὸς ἐκάλει τέλος ἐχούσης (*De Defectu Oraculorum* 410b). Cleombrotus traveled extensively to conduct his research; in general the authors of universal history preferred to use documents that were available in libraries; see Mortley 1996, ch.1, "Holism in History Writing."

[27] See Mortley 1996, ch.3, "The Common Culture Theory: Plato and Moses."

[28] See *e.g.* Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca* 1.96.

[29] Droge 1989 is an excellent treatment of the role of the common culture theory in the writings of the church fathers.

completely relativistic: the basic assumption is that Platonist philosophy is the final standard.

Eusebius shares Plutarch's conviction that deeper truths can be found underlying disparate phenomena. *PE*, like *De Iside*, is an extended exercise in ferreting out such truths, also from a particular bias. For Plutarch the clearest expression of the truth is Platonism, but it can also be found by a competent interpreter in polytheistic mythology and religious practice. For Eusebius it is hopeless to look for truth in polytheistic myth or practice: he makes it clear in *PE* 1-6 that as a window onto truth he finds these completely opaque. Eusebius believes that the truth is best expressed by Christian theology, but that a competent interpreter can find it anywhere in Hebrew scripture and in certain parts of Platonist philosophy, including Plato's myths. In *PE* 11 Eusebius compares passages from Hebrew scripture with passages from Plato and his successors (including Plutarch) to show where the Hellenic texts can be said to express the truths first expressed in scripture on such topics as the ineffability of God, the human capacity for naming, the trinity, the immortality of the soul, and so on. He thus in a sense demotes Platonism from the role it has for Plutarch to the role given by Plutarch to traditional religion – a useful but secondary source of truth. In *PE* 13.15-21 Eusebius shows where he considers Plato to have gone wrong, just as Plutarch lists a few elements of Isis mythology that must be rejected as incompatible with higher truth (*De Iside* 358e-f). Eusebius cites a variety of possible explanations for parallels between Hebrew and Platonic thought. Book 10 focuses on the cultural contact theory; in Book

11 he professes ignorance as to whether the true explanation for Plato's knowledge of the intelligible realm is to be found in cultural contact, in inherent mental structures, or in general revelation (*PE* 11.8).

Of the texts that Eusebius cites in *PE* 11 and 12, some are allowed to speak more or less for themselves, and some are presented as requiring allegorical interpretation in order for their philosophical meaning to be made apparent. In several places Eusebius allows a Platonist text to provide the explanation for a more obscure scriptural text. In his discussion of the first cause he compares passages from the book of *Wisdom* with passages from Philo, who he says "[explains] the meaning of the doctrine more clearly," τὴν δὲ τοῦ δόγματος διάνοιαν Φίλων ὁ Ἑβραῖος λευκότερον ἑρμηνεύων.... (*PE* 11.14.10). According to Eusebius' account, the identification of God as Being, τὸ ὄν, first expressed by Moses in the story of the burning bush when God says ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν (*Exodus* 3.14), is explained by Plato in *Timaeus*, then more clearly by Numenius, and more clearly still by Plutarch in *De E apud Delphos* (*PE* 11.9-11). In his comparison of the story of the creation of man with the myth of Poros and Penia in the *Symposium* Eusebius states explicitly that both stories were allegorically composed:

> Moses in words of mystery says that in the beginning of the foundation of the world there was a certain paradise of God, and that in it the man was deceived by the serpent through the woman; hear what Plato has written in *Symposium*, all but paraphrasing Moses' words and for his part also writing allegorically.... [Eusebius quotes *Symposium* 203b-c.] In this passage as well Plato, like Moses, spoke of these things in riddles.[30]

[30] Μωσέως κατά τινας ἀπορρήτους λόγους ἐν ἀρχῇ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου συστάσεως θεοῦ τινα παράδεισον γεγονέναι φάντος κἀν τούτῳ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἠπατῆσθαι διὰ τῆς γυναικὸς πρὸς τοῦ

In his commentaries on Hebrew scripture and in *Demonstratio Evangelica* Eusebius often engages in allegorical interpretation, which he signals by using the terms αἴνιγμα, ὑπόνοια, ἀλληγορία, τροπολογία and their cognates.[31] At *DE* 1.1, for instance, Eusebius interprets a prophecy about the destruction of the rulers of Moab as figuratively referring to the defeat of invisible evil powers. A particularly interesting example is found in Eusebius' commentary on *Isaiah* 18.4, "For thus said the Lord to me, 'There will be safety in my city; it will be like the hot light of noon and like a cloud of dew on harvest-day.'" Eusebius interprets the second part of the verse as follows: "The light is the very *Logos* of God, who shines on his church everywhere; the cloud of dew is the Holy Spirit, who obscures the highest theology of the only-begotten son of God from those who are not able to comprehend it...."[32] He reads the term νεφέλη δρόσου as a meta-allegory: the work of the Holy Spirit in expressing the truth about Christ in a veiled, obscure way is itself described in veiled terms.

Eusebius' allegorical approach to scripture also emerges in his discussion in *PE* of Jewish use of scripture:

> Among the Hebrews also it is the custom to teach the histories of the inspired Scriptures to those with childish souls in a very simple way just like any myths, but to teach those whose minds are well trained the deeper doctrinal speculations

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ὄφεως, ἄντικρυς μονονουχὶ τὰ ῥήματα μεταποιήσας ὁ Πλάτων ἐπάκουσον ἐν Συμποσίῳ οἷα καὶ αὐτὸς ἀλληγορῶν τέθειται... Τοιαῦτα μὲν δή τινα κἀν τούτοις ὁ Πλάτων ἐμφερῶς Μωσεῖ ὑπηνίξατο (*PE* 12.11.1,2).

[31] See Sant 1967, 40-47, 56-67, for a discussion organized around the various figures of speech that Eusebius identifies in scripture.

[32] φῶς μὲν οὖν αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος ὁ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν αὐτοῦ διὰ παντὸς φωτίζων, νεφέλη δρόσου τὸ πρεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τὸ τὴν ἄκραν θεολογίαν τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῖς μὴ οἵοις τε αὐτὴν χωρεῖν ἐπισκιάζον... (*Commentaria in Isaiam* 18.4).

> on the words, by means of the so-called deuterosis and by elucidation of the thoughts that are hidden to the multitude.[33]

The Jewish practice that Eusebius commends here views the stories of the Old Testament as μύθοι and treats them much as Plutarch treats the myths of Isis, as valuable for their religious content and as a first step on the path to higher knowledge (see *e.g. De Iside* 359a).

This examination of the allegorical methods of Plutarch and of Eusebius is meant to show the commonalities between these two representatives of Christian and non-Christian middle Platonism. Both attempt to take a broad view that encompasses all of Mediterranean culture; both are committed to a symbolic view of the world that attaches great importance to the discernment of a spiritual reality that lies behind disparate mundane phenomena. And both thinkers stress the importance of religion in this process – with the understanding that the data of religion require elucidation if their deepest, truest meanings are to be revealed.

Symbolic Thought in De Vita Constantini

In *VC* the validity of a symbolic approach is assumed, rather than discussed. Symbolic thought manifests itself in a variety of ways in different parts of the text, the

[33] καὶ παρ' Ἑβραίοις δὲ τὰς τῆς ἐνθέου γραφῆς ἱστορίας τοῖς νηπίοις τὰς ψυχὰς ἁπλούστερον ὥσπερ τινὰς μύθους ἔθος ἐστὶ παραδιδόναι, τοῖς δὲ ἐγγεγυμνασμένοις τὴν ἕξιν τὰς τῶν λόγων βαθυτέρας καὶ δογματικὰς θεωρίας διὰ τῆς καλουμένης δευτερώσεως καὶ σαφηνείας τῶν λανθανόντων τοὺς πολλοὺς νοημάτων (*PE* 12.4.2). Eusebius cites Socrates' recommendations for the use of myth in education at *Republic* 2.376-7 as a parallel for the Jewish view.

most obvious of which involves the use of scripture as a gloss on contemporary matters. This interpretive method is the focus of the remainder of this chapter. In the prologue, Eusebius reveals that he intends his narrative to express a deeper truth also expressed in scripture, namely that of divine retribution and reward. Religious texts and events of recent history will be shown to be mutually elucidating, when properly selected and interpreted. The general claim expressed in the prologue is then developed more specifically in the comparison of Constantine to Moses.

The Prologue: A Philosophical Setting

In the prologue of *VC* Eusebius claims a high epistemological status for the idea of divine justice by means of an elaborate play on the word λόγος, which he uses in the senses of speech, of individual thought or intelligence, and of divine intelligence. Eusebius begins the prologue by evoking for the reader's imagination the grandiose setting of a *basilikos logos* by referring to the speeches that he gave for the emperor's *vicennalia* and *tricennalia*. He describes the latter as "garlands of words," employing λόγος in its basic meaning of "spoken word":

> Recently the whole human race held festivals to celebrate several ten-year anniversaries of the great Emperor; recently I myself, addressing the council of the ministers of God, honored the conqueror with hymns for the twentieth anniversary of his reign; a very short while ago to celebrate his thirtieth anniversary I wove garlands of words (λόγων) at the palace to crown his sacred head.[34]

[34] Ἄρτι μὲν τῷ μεγάλῳ βασιλεῖ παντοίων δεκάδων περιόδους ἐν ἑορτῶν εὐωχίαις πᾶν γένος ἀνθρώπων ἐπανηγύριζεν, ἄρτι δὲ καὶ ἡμεῖς αὐτοὶ τὸν καλλίνικον, μέσον ἀπολαβόντες θεοῦ λειτουργῶν συνόδου, ἡμεῖς αὐτοὶ τοὺ καλλίνικον, μέσον ἀπολαβόντες θεοῦ λειτουργῶν συνόδου, εἰκοσαετηρικοῖς ὕμνοις ἐγεραίρομεν, ἤδη δὲ καὶ τριακονταετηρικοὺς αὐτῷ λόγων

In the next sentence he uses λόγος again, but in the sense of "intellect", "power of speech", or simply "thought": "But today our λόγος stands helpless, longing to give voice to some of the usual things, but at a loss as to which way even to turn and awe-struck by the sheer wonder of the astonishing spectacle."[35] The reader is likely to guess that Eusebius' *aporia* is a result of his being confronted with yet another magnificent imperial setting in which he is expected to deliver an oration. But in the next sentence it becomes apparent that it is more than the sight before his eyes that has him tongue-tied. The "astonishing spectacle" is Constantine himself, alive and still ruling even after his death. On earth Eusebius' λόγος sees Constantine ruling through his sons and is disconcerted (*VC* 1.1.3-1.2.1); looking into heaven, it sees his soul "in the presence of God Himself, stripped of all mortal and earthly attire and shining in a robe that flashes like lightning" and is completely dumbstruck.[36] When he says that his λόγος sees Constantine's soul in heaven, Eusebius uses the verb φαντάζεται, a term with philosophic overtones. In Stoicism φαντασία refers to the process of visualization, by which an object makes an impression on the soul of the viewer.[37] Philostratus gives the term a Platonist connotation, however, by making it refer to the visualization and

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πλέξαντες στεφάνους, ἐν αὐτοῖς πρώην βασιλείοις τὴν ἱερὰν κεφαλὴν ἀνεστέφομεν... (*VC* 1.1.1).

[35] νυνὶ δ' ὁ λόγος ἡμῖν ἀνηχανῶν ἕστηκε, ποθῶν μέν τι τῶν συνήθων προσφθέγξασθαι, ἀπορῶν δ' ὅπῃ καὶ τράποιτο μόνῳ τε τῷ θαύματι τῆς ξενιζούσης ὄψεως καταπεπληγμένος (*VC* 1.1.2).

[36] ἤδη δὲ καὶ πρὸς αὐταῖς οὐρανίαις ἀψῖσιν ἑαυτὸν ἐκτείνας, κἀνταῦθα τὴν τρισμακαρίαν ψυχὴν αὐτῷ θεῷ συνοῦσαν φαντάζεται, θνητοῦ μὲν καὶ γεώδους παντὸς ἀφειμένην περιβλήματος, φωτὸς δ' ἐξαστραπτούσῃ στολῇ καταλαμπομένην (*VC* 1.2.2).

[37] Elsner 1995, 26, with references.

representation of that which is real but not visible.[38] In saying that his thought envisions, φαντάζεται, the soul of Constantine in heaven, Eusebius is describing a vision of something intelligible, as opposed to sensible, by means of the mind's eye.[39] Eusebius has superimposed a philosophic context on the epideictic one and invited the reader to visualize a setting not only more awe-inspiring than the imperial court but actually on a different level of reality.

The escape from its *aporia* in this other-worldly context is for the λόγος to call on the λόγος of God – the third sense in which Eusebius uses λόγος – to communicate an all but ineffable message.

> Then, understanding that his soul is no longer confined to spending long stretches of time in the pastimes of mortal men, but is honored with the never dying, ever flourishing diadem of an eternal life of joy, my λόγος, being mortal, is dumbstruck. It has nothing to say: it convicts itself of inadequacy, condemns itself to silence, and abdicates to the mighty universal λόγος the right to sing fitting songs of praise. Only the immortal λόγος of God can confirm his own words by which he prophesied that those who honor and revere him would be requited with blessings of surpassing abundance, while those who set themselves up as his enemies would bring about the destruction of their own souls. And so he has now established that the promises of his own words are trustworthy, for he has shown that tyrants who reject God and make war on God end their lives in utter misery, but he has revealed his own servant's death as well as his life to be enviable, blessed, and worthy of great praise. So it too deserves to be commemorated not with mortal but with immortal monuments.[40]

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[38] Apollonius, defending Greek anthropomorphic statues of the gods, says, φαντασία...ταῦτα εἰργάσατο, σοφωτέρα μιμήσεως δημιουργός· μίμησις μὲν γὰρ δημιουργήσει ὃ εἶδεν, φαντασία δὲ καὶ ὃ μὴ εἶδεν, ὑποθήσεται γὰρ αὐτὸ πρὸς τὴν ἀναφορὰν τοῦ ὄντος... (Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 6.19). See also Plotinus *Enneades* 5.8.1 and references to Porphyry *et al*. in LSJ *s.v.* φαντάζομαι.

[39] See Elsner 1995, 27: "The theory of *phantasia*...points to an intelligible world beyond the senses as ultimately more real. It is to this intelligible world which cannot be seen with the eyes that *phantasia*, which 'proceeds with reality as its basis' [Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 6.19], gives access."

[40] εἶτ' οὐκέτι μὲν μακραῖς χρόνων περιόδοις ἐν θνητῶν διατριβαῖς εἰλουμένην αὐτὴν, αἰωνοθαλεῖ δὲ διαδήματι ζωῆς ἀτελευτήτου καὶ μακαρίου αἰῶνος ἀθανασίᾳ τετιμημένην ἐννοῶν, ἀχανὴς ἕστηκεν οἷα θνητὸς λόγος, μηδεμίαν μὲν ἀφιεὶς φωνὴν τῆς δ' αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ

The divine λόγος is called on not only to praise Constantine but, in so doing, also to "confirm his own words" that promise divine retribution to God's enemies and reward to his friends. Eusebius here refers to the countless scriptural texts that spell out the lesson that the devout earn rewards from God while the impious invite their own ineluctable punishment.[41] These scriptural texts are then said to have already been proved by the events of recent years: the miserable deaths of the persecuting tetrarchs and the blessed life and death of Constantine. Eusebius slips from scripture to contemporary events, finding that both reflect a truth about divine justice that he locates ultimately with the λόγος. He thus establishes an allegorical component to the work: the reader is being instructed to expect that the story of Constantine's life will convey a deeper truth, not just a useful moral message but a reality about the way the deity interacts with the world, already expressed in scripture but now revealed again in the events of Constantine's life and death.

He then returns at the end of the passage just quoted to the idea of an appropriate artistic response and hints again at his own inadequacy: the marvel of Constantine's life

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κατεγνωκὼς ἀσθενείας, καὶ δὴ σιωπὴν καθ' ἑαυτοῦ ψηφισάμενος τῷ κρείττονι καὶ καθόλου λόγῳ παραχωρεῖ τυγχάνειν τῆς τῶν ἐφαμίλλων ὕμνων ἀξίας· ᾧ δὴ καὶ μούῳ δυνατὸν ἀθανάτῳ καὶ θεοῦ ὄντι λόγῳ τὰς οἰκείας πιστοῦσθαι φωνάς. δι' ὧν τοὺς μὲν αὐτὸν δοξάζοντάς τε καὶ τιμῶντας ἀμοιβαίοις ὑπερβάλλεσθαι χαρίσμασι, τοὺς δ' ἐχθροὺς καὶ πολεμίους σφᾶς αὐτοὺς αὐτῷ καταστήσαντας τὸν ψυχῶν ὄλεθρον ἑαυτοῖς περιποιήσειν θεσπίσας, ἐντεῦθεν ἤδη τῶν αὐτοῦ λόγων τὰς ἐπαγγελίας ἀψευδεῖς παρεστήσατο, ἀθέων μὲν καὶ θεομάχων τυράννων ἀπευκτὰ δείξας τοῦ βίου τὰ τέλη, τοῦ δ' αὐτοῦ θεράποντος ζηλωτὸν καὶ πολυύμνητον πρὸς τῇ ζωῇ καὶ τὸν θάνατον ἀποφήνας, ὡς ἀξιομνημόνευτον καὶ τοῦτον στηλῶν τε οὐ θνητῶν ἀλλ' ἀθανάτων ἐπάξιον γενέσθαι (*VC* 1.2.3 – 1.3.1).

[41] The closing couplet of the song of Deborah may be cited as a particularly concise expression of the scriptural logic of retribution: "So may all your enemies perish, Lord! But may those who love you be like the rising sun in its might" (*Judges* 5.31). The enemy in question is the Canaanite general Sisera, who had a tent peg pounded through his skull by Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite, as he lay sleeping in her tent.

and death "deserves to be commemorated not with mortal but with immortal monuments." Eusebius proposes to hand over the task of narrating and interpreting the life and death of Constantine to the divine λόγος, but within a few paragraphs he will have talked himself out of his dilemma and will proceed with narrative and interpretation (*VC* 1.10-11).

Constantine and Moses

The narrative of Constantine's life opens with a comparison of the formative years of Moses and Constantine in which the theme of divine justice is readily apparent, in that both leaders are said to have been raised up by God to liberate a people oppressed by tyrants. The comparison of Constantine and Moses had suggested itself naturally enough after Maxentius' debacle at the Milvian Bridge, and Eusebius had written up the 312 battle shortly afterward as a replaying of the Exodus story, for inclusion in the second version of his *Historia Ecclesiastica* (*HE* 9.9.4-8).[42] When he wrote *VC*, twenty years later, rather than write a new account of the battle of the Milvian Bridge Eusebius copied the *HE* passage almost verbatim at the appropriate place in his narrative, after the account of Constantine's conversion (*VC* 1.38, quoted on pp. 44-5 *infra*). He wrote expressly for *VC*, however, the passage immediately following the prologue, comparing Moses and Constantine as virtuous young men reared in the palaces of tyrants but called away by God to be liberators of their people

[42] Barnes 1981, 149-50.

(*VC* 1.12). The differing origins of the two passages will turn out to be of some significance in their interpretation.

The passage that follows the prologue and opens the account of Constantine's life (the one composed for *VC*) is quoted in part here.

> Let us begin our account from the man's youth. According to an ancient story, fearsome generations of tyrants once oppressed the Hebrew people, but God, revealing himself as gracious to the oppressed, in his providence caused the prophet Moses, still a mere child, to be reared in the heart of the tyrants' palace and to have a share in their wisdom. Time as it passed called him to manhood, while justice, defender of those who are treated unjustly, began to pursue the unjust. That was when the prophet of God left that home of the tyrants and began to serve the will of the Almighty. He became estranged in word and deed from the tyrants who had reared him and acknowledged as his own those who were truly his brothers and kin. God then raised him up as leader of the whole nation and freed the Hebrews from enslavement to their enemies, while through him he pursued the race of tyrants with divinely ordained torments. This ancient tale, handed down to many people in the form of a myth, had formerly been heard by everyone, but now the same God has granted that we too should see with our own eyes fresh, recent, and palpable marvels greater than those related in myths and more real than any story we might hear. Tyrants of our own day, eager to go to war against the God over all, began to oppress his Church. But Constantine was in their midst, soon to be a tyrant-slayer but at that time still a boy, young and tender and blooming with youth; like that servant of God, he sat at the tyrants' hearth, but though just a boy he did not follow the ways of those godless men...[43]

[43] Ἐξ αὐτῆς δ' ἤδη πρώτης ἡλικίας τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ὧδέ πῃ τῆς γραφῆς ἀπαρξώμεθα. Παλαιὰ κατέχει φήμη δεινά ποτε γένη τυράννων τὸν Ἑβραίων καταπονῆσαι λεών, θεὸν δὲ τοῖς καταπονουμένοις εὐμενῆ παραφανέντα Μωϋσέα προφήτην ἔτι τότε νηπιάζοντα μέσοις αὐτοῖς τυραννικοῖς οἴκοις τε καὶ κόλποις τραφῆναι καὶ τῆς παρ' αυτοῖς μετασχεῖν προνοῆσαι σοφίας. ὡς δ' ἐπιὼν ὁ χρόνος τὸν μὲν εἰς ἄνδρας ἐκάλει, δίκη δ' ἡ τῶν ἀδικουμένων ἀρωγὸς τοὺς ἀδικούντας μετήει, τηνικαῦτα ἐξ αὐτῶν τυραννικῶν δωμάτων προελθὼν ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ προφήτης τῇ τοῦ κρείττονος διηκονεῖτο βουλῇ, τῶν μὲν ἀναθρεψαμένων τυράννων ἔργοις καὶ λόγοις ἀλλοτριούμενος, τοὺς δ' ἀληθεῖ λόγῳ σφετέρους ἀδελφούς τε καὶ συγγενεῖς ἀποφαίνων γνωρίμους, κἄπειτα θεὸς αὐτὸν καθηγεμόνα τοῦ παντὸς ἔθνους ἐγείρας, Ἑβραίους μὲν τῆς ὑπὸ τοῖς ἐχθροῖς ἠλευθέρου δουλείας, τὸ δὲ τυραννικὸν γένος θεηλάτοις μετήρχετο δι' αὐτοῦ κολαστηρίοις. φήμη μὲν αὕτη παλαιὰ, μύθου σχήματι τοῖς πολλοῖς παραδεδομένη, τὰς πάντων ἀκουὰς ἐπλήρου πρότερον, νυνὶ δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς καὶ ἡμῖν θεὸς μειζόνων ἢ κατὰ μύθους θαυμάτων ἐναργεῖς αὐτοπτικὰς θέας νεαραῖς ὄψεσι πάσης ἀκοῆς ἀληθεστέρας δεδώρηται. τύραννοι μὲν γὰρ οἱ καθ' ἡμᾶς τὸν ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸν πολεμεῖν ὡρμημένοι τὴν αὐτοῦ κατεπόνουν ἐκκλησίαν, μέσος δὲ τούτων Κωνσταντῖνος, ὁ μετ' ὀλίγον τυραννοκτόνος, παῖς ἄρτι νέος ἁπαλὸς ὡραῖός

The first thing to note about Eusebius' use of the comparison with Moses is that he is drawing on a convention fairly well established among Hellenic thinkers that Moses, like Solon or Lycurgus, was one of the great sages and lawgivers.[44] The earliest known portrayal of Moses in this light is a fragment of the *Aegyptiaca* of Hecataeus of Abdera,[45] written in the late fourth or early third century B.C.E.; the next appears in Strabo.[46] Moses receives a similar favorable treatment from Pompeius Trogus, pseudo-Galen, the middle Platonist Numenius of Apamea, Porphyry, and Longinus.[47] Numenius is credited with a pithy summation of Moses' place in the common culture: "What is Plato but Moses speaking Attic Greek?"[48] Jewish and Christian writers naturally adopted the theme for apologetic ends: Philo's *De Vita Mosis* presents Moses as a philosopher-king, with obvious reference to Plato's *Republic*,[49] and the latter part of Josephus' *Contra Apionem* is a defense of Moses. Philo is an important source for Clement of Alexandria's account of Moses in the *Stromateis*.[50] Eusebius, drawing heavily on Philo, Clement, and several pagan sources, makes the theme of Moses as

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τ' ἀνθοῦσιν ἰούλοις, οἷα ἀυτὸς ἐκεῖνος ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ θεράπων, τυραννικαῖς ἐφήδρευσεν ἑστίαις, οὐ μὴν καὶ τρόπων τῶν ἴσων, καίπερ νέος ὤν, τοῖς ἀθέοις ἐκοινώνει (*VC* 1.12.1-2).

[44] Gager 1972 traces the various strands in the pagan tradition of Moses.

[45] Preserved by Photius in an excerpt from Diodorus Siculus. It appears in the LCL edition of Diodorus as *Bibliotheca* 40.3. See Gager 1972, 26-37.

[46] Strabo, *Geographia* 16.2.35-39. See Gager 1972, 38-47.

[47] See Gager 1972, 48-79.

[48] τί γάρ ἐστι Πλάτων ἢ Μωυσῆς ἀττικίζων; Quoted by Clement at *Stromateis* 1.22; Eusebius quotes the Clement passage at *PE* 9.6 and refers to the saying from Numenius again at *PE* 11.10.

[49] See especially *De Vita Mosis* 2.1-3.

[50] *Stromateis* 1.23ff. Van den Hoek 1988, ch. 3, discusses Clement's use of Philo's *De Vita Mosis*.

prototypical sage, lawgiver, and ruler a major one in his *Praeparatio Evangelica*.[51] By opening the narrative of *VC* with a comparison to Moses, Eusebius is aiming to allude at least as much to current topics in Hellenic history and philosophy as to biblical knowledge over which a Christian audience would feel a sense of ownership.[52]

The Methodology of the Moses Comparison

In a sense the comparison is a rhetorical *synkrisis* of the sort recommended by Menander Rhetor for *basilikoi logoi*, in that Constantine, the subject of the work, which to this point has been a fairly standard panegyric, is being compared favorably to a great leader from the past. But this comparison is more complex in its function than a standard *synkrisis*. Eusebius includes a much more typical *synkrisis* in his prologue, where he compares Constantine to Cyrus and Alexander (*VC* 1.7-8). He does strike an original note there by making the comparison unfavorable to Cyrus and Alexander, but the question he deals with, the comparative felicity of the end of the three leaders' lives, is quite typical, as is the manner in which he handles it. In the comparison with Moses, however, it is not a matter of tabulating feats and faults, blessings and misfortunes. We shall see as we proceed that Constantine's life is made to verify a truth about God and his dealings with the world that had already been demonstrated by Moses' life. The

[51] See *e.g. PE* 7.9ff. The theme is an undercurrent in any passage in which Eusebius discusses passages from the Pentateuch, which he attributes in full to Moses.

[52] For Christian ownership of Hebrew scripture see the preface to *DE* 3 (tr. Ferrar): "And I have also made it clear that their prophetic writings in their foresight of the future recorded our own calling through Christ, so that we make use of them not as books alien to us, but as our own property." ...καὶ ἔτι πρὸς τούτοις συστάντος ὡς αἱ προφητικαὶ παρ' αὐτοῖς γραφαὶ προλαβοῦσαι τὸ μέλλον τῆς ἡμετέρας διὰ Χριστοῦ γενομένης κλήσεως ἐμνημόνευσαν, διὸ καὶ ὡς οἰκείων, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀλλοτρίων αὐτῶν μεταποιούμεθα.

focus is shifted slightly from praise of Constantine to exultation in the workings of providence – though the glory for Constantine, as a tool of providence of the same order as Moses, is perhaps all the greater than in a more straightforward formulation.

It has been said that with the Moses-Constantine comparison Eusebius has created the first instance of a biblical typology applied to a non-biblical figure;[53] as this seemingly uncontroversial statement contains pitfalls for our understanding of this aspect of *VC* we will examine it more closely. Typology is a compositional or interpretive strategy that "sets up a relationship between events, institutions, or persons in the past – as a promise or prefiguring (the type) – and later or perhaps still awaited events – as the fulfillment (the antitype)." [54] It was one of the methods used by Christian writers to give Christian meaning to Hebrew scripture. The earliest Christian typologies are found already in the New Testament: Christ is made to compare his crucifixion to Moses' lifting up a bronze serpent on a pole during a plague (*John* 3.14) and his burial to Jonah's being swallowed by the whale (*Matthew* 12.40). Paul in the letter to the Romans compares Christ to Adam; this passage has the first use of the word τύπος in the sense of an Old Testament prototype for a New Testament person or event (*Romans* 5.14). The word ἀντίτυπος for the New Testament parallel appears already at *I Peter* 3.21, where baptism is compared to the flood; at *Hebrews* 9.24 ἀντίτυπος is used with a different sense: the "sanctuary made with hands" is described as the ἀντίτυπος, or

[53] Hollerich 1990, 323.
[54] *Der Neue Pauly*, *s.v.* Typologie.

earthly copy, of the true sanctuary.[55] The patristic writers developed these and other typologies, such as the comparison of Jesus with Joseph and Joshua.

Typology has traditionally been viewed by students of biblical literature in sharp contrast with allegory. In this context allegory is understood as an interpretive strategy that completely replaces historical with spiritual meaning, in that it looks not just for deeper meanings but for meanings that are unassociated with the surface meaning of the text (unassociated, that is, from the point of view of the modern scholar; for the ancient interpreter the connection between surface and deeper meaning was always real); allegory in this sense is contrasted with typology's supposed emphasis on the historicity of the events that it compares.[56] Typology and allegory are often seen by modern scholars as the province of two distinct schools of thought, whose adherents were characterized by distinct mindsets.[57] The typology school, based in Antioch, is supposed to have attracted those of a historical, literal-minded bent, while the allegory school, based in Alexandria, attracted the more abstract thinkers. Édouard des Places puts Eusebius between the two schools, as Caesarea was between the two cities; Michael

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[55] See Hanson 1959, 67. The same understanding of the tabernacle is developed at length by Philo (*Quaestiones et Solutiones in Exodum* 2.51-106), on whom Eusebius draws in his discussion of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in *VC* 4.

[56] For particularly influential articulations of this approach see Auerbach 1944 and Daniélou 1950. Origen's interpretation of the exodus story in his *Homiliae in Exodum* as depicting the progress of the soul toward salvation is considered allegorical by this definition (see Auerbach 1944, 36, and Daniélou 1969, 34-37). In fact, however, many of Origen's interpretations in the *Homiliae in Exodum* begin by drawing New Testament parallels and could easily be considered typological for this reason (see *e.g.* *Homiliae in Exodum* 3.3).

[57] See Auerbach 1944, *e.g.* p.36 ("The difference between Tertullian's more historical and realistic interpretation and Origen's ethical, allegorical approach reflects a current conflict, known to us from other early Christian sources: one party strove to transform the events of the New and still more of the Old Testament into purely spiritual happenings, to 'spirit away' their historical character —the other wished to preserve the full historicity of the Scriptures along with the deeper meaning") and Daniélou 1950, *e.g.* pp.51-52, 199-200.

Hollerich and David Wallace-Hadrill put him squarely on the historical side.[58] The dichotomy, while useful in some ways, can be overemphasized.[59] In the first place it is important to recognize that the purported distinction between the two mindsets is false. Eusebius' best-known and most original work is the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, which is short on abstract thought and long on historical detail, so it is natural that he should be credited with a world view based in history. But even a massive output of historical writings by a writer of Eusebius' day does not necessarily indicate a lack of interest in abstract philosophical thought. As we have noted above, for those working in the context of universal historiography, history was considered the basis for philosophy. It is clear in *PE*, which is a kind of universal intellectual history, that the historical information is ancillary to the philosophical conclusions that Eusebius draws. Eusebius' philosophical side has been noted by Mortley:

> The evidence collected here indicates one important truth which has often been overlooked, namely that Eusebius is one of the great Platonists of the late antique era. The extraordinary discontinuity between the Hellenistic sections of Eusebius' writing, and the well-known works such as the *Church History*, or the Roman style encomiastic writing, point to a profound complexity in Eusebius' intellectual make-up. As des Places and Favrelle show, Eusebius needs to be studied as an example of Christian Platonism every bit as much as Clement or Origen.[60]

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[58] Des Places 1982, 194. Hollerich 1989, 433: "Eusebius, then, was deeply committed to a historical basis for his exegesis and his apologetics." See Wallace-Hadrill 1960, ch.7.

[59] See Dawson 2002 for a recent attempt to lend more subtlety to the traditional dichotomy. Dawson argues that Alexandrian exegesis was more concerned with history than the traditional view grants. In his goal of defending Alexandrian exegesis against the charge of supersessionism his success is limited, as he acknowledges (216-18).

[60] Mortley 1996, 166-7. The evidence to which Mortley refers is contained in the commentary to *PE* 11 written by des Places and Geneviève Favrelle. Mortley's focus here is on *PE*; the "Roman style encomiastic works," by which he presumably means *SC*, *LC*, and *VC*, reflect Eusebius' fascination with philosophy more than Mortley seems to grant here, as I hope to show for *VC*.

Eusebius was not unique among Christian writers in using history as a basis for philosophy; the same could be said of Clement of Alexandria and Origen, whose *Stromateis* and *Contra Celsum* deal with historical material and are heavily mined by Eusebius in *PE*. Origen is usually made to represent the allegorizing, ahistorical mindset associated with Alexandrian theology, but in fact his *Contra Celsum*, a response to a historically based critique of Christianity, is a product of the universal history movement. So the idea of two distinct mindsets, a historical one that favored typology and a philosophical one that favored allegory, is difficult to maintain.

A second problem with the typology/allegory opposition is that it is a modern construct, based on modern concerns with historicity. (The term typology itself is an invention of the eighteenth century.) Mid-twentieth-century theologians who wrote on the topic show a distinct preference for typology's perceived respect for the historical reality of the events being interpreted.[61] More recent scholarship has called into question the prevailing view that typology is fully distinct from allegory and that the validity of a typology rests on the historicity of the earlier event. As Frances Young writes,

[61] See Hanson 1959, 63: "Alexandrian allegory has in all its forms one feature in common with Hellenistic allegory; it is unhistorical. It does not use typology. Its ultimate aim is to empty the text of any particular connection with historical events." And on p.283, referring to Origen's allegorizing exegesis: "All is merged in a morass of spiritualizing exposition which has no legitimate ground in historical reality. Origen certainly opened the way to the discovery in the text of the Bible of the deepest secrets of the spiritual life, but the only tools which he provided for the operation were those of theological fantasy." A similar approach informs the influential articles by Lampe (1957) and Woollcombe (1957). Lampe, a distinguished Biblical scholar, had an interest in the subject that was more than academic; he hoped by defining a historically-oriented typology to "restore to the ordinary Christian reader something of his inheritance of Biblical exegesis, while still remaining faithful to the canons and principles of literary and historical criticism" (Lampe 1957, 22). According to A.C. Charity, the concern to distinguish typology from allegory began in the Reformation, when allegorical exegesis fell out of fashion (Charity 1966, 171, n.2).

> Ancient exegetes did not distinguish between typology and allegory, and it is often difficult to make the distinction, the one shading into the other all too easily....What the patristic texts describe as a 'type' is a mimetic 'impress' or figure in the narrative or action described: Moses' uplifted arms at the battle against Amalek represent the cross in the same way as the outstretched wings of Ephrem's bird....The word *typos* may be used for any 'model' or 'pattern' or 'parable' foreshadowing its fulfillment, whether an event or an oft-repeated ritual. It is not its character as historical event which makes a 'type'; what matters is its mimetic quality.[62]

This mimetic quality also emerges in the example mentioned above from *Hebrews*, where the language of typology is used to describe a mimetic relationship not between two events in history but between an earthly and a spiritual reality. Typology was a more sophisticated hermeneutic tool than has usually been assumed, in that the patristic authors who use it were much more interested in the power of texts and of extra-textual symbols to carry spiritual meaning than in the historical accuracy of what the texts describe. Typology is a useful term for describing comparative interpretations of various kinds, especially those that the patristic authors perceived as revealing a pattern of prefiguration and fulfillment in the Old and New Testaments. But it should be kept in mind that it was one tool among many for discerning deeper meaning in a text or other phenomenon.

In fact the Moses comparison in *VC* sits somewhere between a Biblical typology and a moral *exemplum*. As Young points out,

> In the Hellenistic environment, the moralizing tendency characteristic of rhetorical exegesis and composition easily turned the biographical typologies

[62] Young 1997, 152-3. "Ephrem's bird" is a reference to a poem of Ephrem Syrus (d. 373) in which he describes the figure of a cross in a bird's wings: "the air will not carry the bird unless its wings confess the cross" (*Faith* 18.6, quoted at Young 1997, 148). See also the article by James Barr *s.v.* "Allegory and Typology" in Richardson and Bowden 1983.

> into "exemplars," types of virtuous action, paraenetic examples presented in homilies for imitation.... But the key figures of the ancient scriptures also become "types" of Christ, so acquiring prophetic and eschatological significance.[63]

There is clearly a paraenetic component to the description of the virtues and virtuous actions of Moses and Constantine, particularly insofar as *VC* is a "mirror for princes" for the benefit of the sons of Constantine.[64] But what Young describes here as prophetic significance, a central component particularly of Christological typology, is also apparent: Moses is presented as prefiguring Constantine, and Constantine as recapitulating Moses. Furthermore, the supersessionist element of New Testament and patristic typology, whereby the Christian phenomenon is understood as "fulfilling" the Jewish one, is echoed in the *VC* comparison, in that the story of Constantine's life is presented as more trustworthy because it is contemporary. In the passage describing the battle of the Milvian Bridge in terms of the crossing of the Red Sea, written originally for *HE*, the recent event is presented as lending credibility to the Old Testament story:

> [Constantine] was now very near to Rome itself. Then, so that he would not be compelled to fight against the people of Rome because of the tyrant, God himself as if with chains drew the tyrant out far beyond the gates. And so those ancient sayings against wicked men (which most people disbelieve because they are framed as a myth, though they are believable to believers, at least, because they are inscribed in sacred books) he confirmed by actual deeds, making them believable to all eyes – those of believers and unbelievers alike – that witnessed those incredible events. Just as once in the time of Moses and the pious Hebrew race "He threw Pharaoh's chariots and his force into the sea, and picked cavalry commanders he drowned in the Red Sea," in the same way Maxentius and his soldiers and bodyguards "sank into the depths like a stone" when, turning tail before the power of God that was with Constantine, he tried to march his army

[63] Young 1994, 41.
[64] See *VC*, ed. Winkelmann, trans. Cameron and Hall, 11-12.

> across the river. He himself had bridged it with boats and in so doing had engineered a device for his own destruction, though he had hoped to use it to ensnare the friend of God.[65]

The historicity of the Old Testament event is in fact *more* of an issue in this passage than in most biblical typology. In the passage that immediately follows the prologue and describes the youth of Moses and Constantine,[66] written for *VC*, Eusebius does not insist on the historicity of the Moses account:

> This ancient tale, handed down to many people in the form of a myth, had formerly been heard by everyone, but now the same God has granted that we too should see with our own eyes fresh, recent, and palpable marvels greater than those related in myths and more real than any story we might hear (*VC* 1.12.2).

The difference is consistent with Eusebius' general tendency to adopt a more urbane, less blatantly Christian posture in his political works; this is the passage that was written expressly for *VC*, rather than for the earlier *HE*, and may be assumed to be the closer representation of the tone that Eusebius intended for *VC*.[67] Eusebius' seeming skepticism toward the story of Moses in *VC* 1.12 has the ring of a passage in Lucian's *How to Write History,* where he advises prospective authors not to judge the historical

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[65] Ἤδη δ' αὐτῆς Ῥώμης ἄγχιστα ἦν, εἶθ' ὡς μὴ τοῦ τυράννου χάριν Ῥωμαίοις πολεμεῖν ἐξαναγκάζοιτο, θεὸς αὐτὸς οἷα δεσμοῖς τισι τὸν τύραννον πορρωτάτω πυλῶν ἐξέλκει, καὶ τὰ πάλαι δὴ κατ' ἀσεβῶν ὡς ἐν μύθου λόγῳ παρὰ τοῖς πλείστοις ἀπιστούμενα, πιστά γε μὴν πιστοῖς ἱεραῖς βίβλοις ἐστηλιτευμένα, αὐταῖς ἐνεργείαις ἅπασιν ἁπλῶς εἰπεῖν πιστοῖς ἅμα καὶ ἀπίστοις ὀφθαλμοῖς τὰ παράδοξα θεωμένοις ἐπιστώσατο. ὥσπερ γοῦν ἐπ' αὐτοῦ ποτε Μωϋσέως τοῦ τε θεοσεβοῦς Ἑβραίων γένους "ἅρματα Φαραὼ καὶ τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ ἔρριψεν εἰς θάλασσαν καὶ ἐπιλέκτους ἀναβάτας τριστάτας κατεπόντισεν ἐν ἐρυθρᾷ", κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ δὴ καὶ Μαξέντιος οἵ τ' ἀμφ' αὐτὸν ὁπλῖται καὶ δορυφόροι "ἔδυσαν εἰς βυθὸν ὡσεὶ λίθος", ὁπηνίκα νῶτα δοὺς τῇ ἐκ θεοῦ μετὰ Κωνσταντίνου δυνάμει τὸν πρὸ τῆς πορείας διήει ποταμόν, ὃν αὐτὸς σκάφεσι ζεύξας καὶ εὖ μάλα γεφυρώσας μηχανὴν ὀλέθρου καθ' ἑαυτοῦ συνεπήξατο, ὧδέ πῃ ἑλεῖν τὸν τῷ θεῷ φίλον ἐλπίσας (*VC* 1.38.1-2). This passage also implicitly makes reference to Xerxes and his bridge of boats across the Hellespont; see p.63 *infra*.

[66] Quoted on p.36 *supra*.

[67] On the difference between Eusebius' political and ecclesiastical writings see Drake 1976, 46-60. Eusebius' failure to reconcile the difference is consistent with the imperfectly edited state of *VC*.

validity of mythical material: "Furthermore, if a myth should come up in your account, tell it, but don't claim definitively that it is true. Take a neutral view of it and let your audience draw their own conclusions about it. Don't commit yourself either way – this is the safest course."[68]

When Eusebius writes in *VC* 1.12 that the story of Moses has been passed down "in the form of a myth" he uses a phrase, μύθου σχήματι, that also occurs in an important passage in *Timaeus*, a work that Eusebius knew well. Whether or not he is making a direct reference, the comparison is instructive. The expression is used by Plato in the passage in which Critias tells how the Egyptian priests explained to Solon that Athens is actually older than Egypt, but the Athenians have not been able to build up a long cultural tradition because unlike Egypt their land is highly susceptible to natural disasters which have repeatedly wiped out not only written records but literacy as well. To prove their point the priests cite the myth of Phaethon, referring to it as "a story told in your land, too," τὸ γὰρ οὖν καὶ παρ' ὑμῖν λεγόμενον..., with the implication that

[68] Καὶ μὴν καὶ μῦθος εἴ τις παρεμπέσοι, λεκτέος μέν, οὐ μὴν πιστωτέος πάντως, ἀλλ' ἐν μέσῳ θετέος τοῖς ὅπως ἂν ἐθέλωσιν εἰκάσουσι περὶ αὐτοῦ. σὺ δ' ἀκίνδυνος καὶ πρὸς οὐδέτερον ἐπιρρεπέστερος (Lucian, *Quomodo Historia Conscribenda Sit* 60). Hollerich 1989 interprets the different attitudes toward the historicity of the Moses account in the two passages as indicating a real change in Eusebius' views, rather than as a function of genre. He suggests that in the period between 312 and 337 Eusebius may have been swayed toward "a more critical assessment" of the Old Testament by writings of Porphyry. Mortley suggests that the skepticism apparent in *VC* 1.12 (the passage about the youth of Constantine and Moses, written for *VC*) was already implied in 1.38 (the battle account, written twenty years earlier for *HE*) in Eusebius' use of the term μύθος in that passage (Mortley 1996, 173-4). Mortley might also have pointed to Eusebius' use in 1.38 of the term πιστός, which suggests that Eusebius only claims a low epistemological status for the Moses story, given that Eusebius follows Clement of Alexandria and Origen in using the word πίστις and its cognates to refer to belief that is not based in reason, *e.g.* at *PE* 1.1.11-12, 1.5.3. (See Lampe *s.v.* πίστις I.1,2. See also Lilla 1971, 118-42, for a detailed study of Clement's treatment of πίστις, and especially p. 140-1 for Clement's dependence on Philo.) Mortley's analysis does not account for the differences between the passages, however, and Hollerich perhaps tries to explain too much: the most economical explanation is that Eusebius altered his emphasis to suit his intended audience.

it is part of a cross-cultural body of myth (*Timaeus* 22c). They explain the myth allegorically in terms of physical science: "Now this is told in the form of a myth, but the truth of it has to do with a deviation of the bodies that travel through the heavens around the earth and the destruction through a great fire of things on earth, which recurs at long intervals...."[69] Plato uses the expression μύθου σχῆμα to signal a statement about an allegorical approach to myth: the form of myth carries a deeper truth.[70]

Origen uses μύθου σχῆμα three times in an extended passage in *Contra Celsum* 4 in which he defends the story of Adam and Eve in *Genesis* as an allegorical composition (*Contra Celsum* 4.36-60). If the story of Pandora, "told by your divinely inspired Hesiod in the form of a myth," can be interpreted allegorically, he asks, why shouldn't the story of Eve?[71] Origen recommends an allegorical reading of Plato's myth of Poros and Penia; if readers imitated Celsus' malice they would ridicule it,

> ...but if by examining philosophically these things that are told in the form of a myth they are able to discern Plato's meaning, they will be amazed at how he was able to hide from the crowd in the form of a myth the great doctrines that were so clear to him and at the same time to express them appropriately for those who are able to deduce from myths that which their author means to say about the truth.[72]

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[69] τοῦτο μύθου μὲν σχῆμα ἔχον λέγεται, τὸ δὲ ἀληθές ἐστι τῶν περὶ γῆν κατ' οὐρανὸν ἰόντων παράλλαξις καὶ διὰ μακρῶν χρόνων γιγνομένη τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς πυρὶ πολλῷ φθορά (*Timaeus* 22c-d).
[70] As Hollerich (1989, 428) points out, Aristotle similarly uses the expression μύθου σχήματι to describe a primitive pantheism that has some affinity with a philosophical view of the cosmos (*Metaphysica* 1074b). Strabo at *Geographia* 1.2.36 says that Homer couched information about the tides in the form of a myth (μύθου σχήματι), *i.e.* the myth of Charybdis; in other passages where Strabo uses the expression (1.2.15, 1.2.31, 1.2.35, 1.3.23) he is simply describing a literary passage as fictional (and thus unhelpful as a source for geographical information) without saying anything about allegorical interpretations.
[71] ἆρα τὰ μὲν τῷ ἐνθέῳ σου Ἡσιόδῳ εἰρημένα ἐν μύθου σχήματι περὶ τῆς γυναικὸς ἀλληγορεῖται... (*Contra Celsum* 4.38.11).
[72] ἐὰν δὲ τὰ ἐν μύθου σχήματι λεγόμενα φιλοσόφως ἐξετάζοντες δυνηθῶσιν εὑρεῖν τὸ βούλημα τοῦ Πλάτωνος, θαυμάσονται τίνα τρόπον δεδύνηται τὰ μεγάλα ἑαυτῷ φαινόμενα δόγματα κρύψαι μὲν διὰ τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐν τῷ τοῦ μύθου σχήματι, εἰπεῖν δ' ὡς ἐχρῆν τοῖς εἰδόσιν ἀπὸ μύθων εὑρίσκειν τὸ περὶ ἀληθείας τοῦ ταῦτα συντάξαντος βούλημα (*Contra Celsum* 4.39.46-51).

The verbal parallel between these passages and *VC* 1.12 corresponds to a methodological parallel. Eusebius, as we have seen, viewed the stories of Hebrew scripture as carrying deeper meanings that required elucidation by a competent interpreter – a symbolic approach. His method in the Moses-Constantine comparison is also symbolic in that it is an effort to bring a truth to the fore by discerning a pattern that replicates that truth in two disparate phenomena. The lives of Moses and Constantine point to a truth about God and the workings of the universe that transcends them both. In the first sentence of *VC* 1.12 Eusebius tells us that God "[revealed] himself as gracious to the oppressed" in raising up Moses, establishing the nature of the divine as a central theme of the passage. He concludes the passage at 1.38 by saying that Constantine and his army have given new expression to the song of Moses, the Israelites' victory song in *Exodus*:

> So it would be reasonable to say that, in deeds if not in words, those who gained the victory from God, just like that great servant Moses, in some way gave voice to the very same hymn against the ancient tyrant of old: "Let us sing to the Lord, for gloriously has he been glorified. He has thrown horse and rider into the sea; he has become my ally and my protector to save me;" and "Who is like you among the gods, Lord, who is like you? Glorified among the holy ones, marvelous, gloriously working wonders."[73]

Eusebius here selects two passages from the song of Moses. The first (*Exodus* 15.1-2) sums up the obvious parallel between the exodus story and the battle of 312, the

[73] ὥστ' εἰκότως ἂν εἰ καὶ μὴ λόγοις, ἔργοις δ' οὖν ὁμοίως τοῖς ἀμφὶ τὸν μέγαν θεράποντα Μωϋσέα τοὺς παρὰ θεοῦ τὴν νίκην ἀραμένους αὐτὰ δὴ τὰ κατὰ τοῦ πάλαι δυσσεβοῦς τυράννου ὧδέ πως ἀνυμνεῖν καὶ λέγειν· "ᾄσωμεν τῷ κυρίῳ, ἐνδόξως γὰρ δεδόξασται. ἵππον καὶ ἀναβάτην ἔρριψεν εἰς θάλασσαν, βοηθὸς καὶ σκεπαστὴς ἐγένετό μοι εἰς σωτηρίαν·" καί "τίς ὅμοιός σοι ἐν θεοῖς, κύριε, τίς ὅμοιός σοι; δεδοξασμένος ἐν ἁγίοις, θαυμαστὸς ἐνδόξως ποιῶν τέρατα" (*VC* 1.38.5).

drowning of the enemy, and assigns credit for it to God, who is portrayed as a warrior fighting on behalf of his people; the second (*Exodus* 15.11) is a more generalized expression of awe before the power of God. The events of the battle of the Milvian Bridge are said to reproduce these statements about God, but only in deeds, not in words: Eusebius' role is to interpret the events of the battle in such a way that the deeper meaning is expressed verbally.

The Deeper Meaning: Divine Retribution

The truth that Eusebius claims to reveal for his readers by comparing Moses and Constantine is that God vindicates the oppressed and punishes their oppressors. In the prologue Eusebius had already established divine retribution and reward as a central theme of *VC*:

> And so he has now established that the promises of his own words are trustworthy, for he has shown that tyrants who reject God and make war on God (ἀθέων μὲν καὶ θεομάχων τυράννων) end their lives in utter misery, but he has shown his own servant's death as well as his life to be enviable, blessed, and worthy of great praise.[74]

Though he does not clearly identify either the oppressors or the oppressed in the prologue, he makes it very clear that Constantine was the instrument of divine vengeance:

> ...he proclaimed him victor over the whole race of tyrants (παντὸς τυραννικοῦ γένους) and destroyer of the giants who made war on God (θεομάχων

[74] *VC* 1.3.1; see p.33-4 *supra*.

γιγάντων), who in their madness and desperation impiously took up arms against the very lord of the universe.[75]

This language from the prologue is picked up in the first Moses comparison at *VC* 1.12. As Eusebius opens the narrative, the first characters to be introduced are "fearsome generations of tyrants" (δεινὰ γένη τυράννων) who are said, in the ancient story, to have oppressed the Hebrew people (*VC* 1.12.1). The word τυράννος and its cognates occur four more times in the first part of the paragraph referring to the Pharaohs, three times in the second part referring to Diocletian and Galerius, their counterparts in recent events. Constantine is described as "the future tyrant-slayer", ὁ μετ' ὀλίγον τυραννοκτόνος (*VC* 1.12.2). The tetrarchs are referred to as ἀθέοι and are said to have been "eager to go to war against the God over all," τὸν ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸν πολεμεῖν ὡρμημένοι (*VC* 1.12.2). With the reference to tyrant-slaying Eusebius recalls traditional tyrannicides such as Harmodius and Aristogeiton; by saying that the tyrants made war on God he alludes to the battle of the Olympians and the giants, to which he referred more directly in the prologue. Thus, in the course of this comparison of Constantine to Moses, Eusebius also brings in two archetypal stories of retribution from Hellenic culture to reinforce the idea that the tetrarchs' punishment was doubly deserved, as they were guilty of crimes against God as well as humanity.

Since both God and humanity were affronted by the tyrants in this account, punishment is understood to have come from both a divine and a human source – the

[75] ...νικητὴν ἀπέδειξε παντὸς τυραννικοῦ γένους θεομάχων τ' ὀλετῆρα γιγάντων, οἳ ψυχῆς ἀπονοίᾳ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἤραντο τὸν παμβασιλέα τῶν ὅλων δυσσεβείας ὅπλα (*VC* 1.5.1).

"double determination" that is a frequent component of stories of retributive justice.[76] Eusebius makes it very clear that the actions of Moses and Constantine are at the behest of a divine guarantor of justice. He says that Moses left the Pharaoh's palace when "justice, defender of those who are treated unjustly, began to pursue the unjust"; in doing so he "began to serve the will of the Almighty" (*VC* 1.12.1). It was God who, "revealing himself as gracious to the oppressed," provided for Moses to be reared in the palace; God is also said to have raised Moses up as leader of the people, to have freed the Hebrews from slavery, and through Moses to have "pursued the race of tyrants with divinely ordained torments." The same God (ὁ αὐτὸς θεός) is given credit for the "marvels greater than those related in myths" that have been witnessed in Eusebius' day, beginning with the rearing of Constantine, the virtuous future tyrannicide, in the palace of the tetrarchs at the very time that they began to oppress the church (*VC* 1.12.2-3).

Eusebius also supplies motivation at the human level. Both Moses and Constantine are said to have followed a different moral path from the tyrants: Moses "became estranged in word and deed from the tyrants who had reared him," and Constantine "though just a boy...did not follow the ways of those godless men" (*VC* 1.12.1,2). They are also said to have acted out of solidarity with the victims of injustice. When Moses left the palace Eusebius says he "acknowledged as his own those who were truly his brothers and kin," a reference to the account in Exodus of Moses' gaining

[76] See Chesnut 1973, 174-6, on the issue of double determination by a practical and a theological cause in Eusebius' works generally.

a sense of solidarity with the Jews.[77] The parallel in Constantine's life is not made explicit, but Eusebius seems to suggest that Constantine acknowledged the Christians of the empire as his spiritual kin and was thus motivated to end the persecution as Moses was motivated to free his fellow Jews from slavery.[78] The emphasis on the exceptional virtue of Moses and Constantine allows for a very compact expression of the truth about divine rewards as well as divine punishment.[79] The two ideas that God punishes his enemies and rewards his friends are inextricably linked for Eusebius, as for the ancients generally, as one principle that we might call divine justice. The narrative of *VC* illustrates a simple version of that principle, wherein evil people and good people come into conflict, and the good people prevail. In stories of this sort one event (battles, generally, in *VC*) constitutes for the evil people both an evil deed and a punishment, and for the good people both a good deed and a reward. The interpreter's job is quite simple with such a narrative, as there is no need to resort to promises of heaven and hell or other devices to explain delayed justice.

After the first comparison to Moses (*VC* 1.12) there follows a long section on Constantine's father, the virtuous Constantius I. Because he honored the God of the universe and declined to persecute the Christians in his territory, Eusebius says he was

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[77] See *Exodus* 2.11-12: "It happened in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to his kin, the children of Israel. He perceived their hard labor and saw an Egyptian beating one of the Hebrews, who was one of his own kin, of the children of Israel. He looked all around and saw no one, and he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand."

[78] For the sense of spiritual kinship attributed to Jesus see *Mark* 3.32-35: "A crowd was sitting around [Jesus]; and they said to him, 'Your mother and your brothers are outside asking for you.' And he answered, 'Who are my mother and my brothers?' And looking around at those seated in a circle around him, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God, that one is my brother and sister and mother.'"

[79] It also of course is at the heart of the paraenetic function of the comparison.

blessed with a peaceful reign, a big family, promotion to senior Augustus, and his eldest son at his side to assume the succession when he died.[80] His virtue is contrasted with his colleagues' vices in a fairly extended *synkrisis* at the beginning of the section; the contrast of blessings and misfortunes at the end of the passage is brief, focusing on Constantius' elevation to senior Augustus and on his large family (*VC* 1.13, 18).

Though the digression on the virtues of Constantius has led him forward in time to a description of that emperor's death, Eusebius now returns to Constantine in Nicomedia, reminding the reader of the Moses analogy: "He was with [Constantius'] imperial colleagues; and though he lived among them, as has been said, his way of life was the same as that of the ancient prophet of God."[81] There follows a description of Constantine in terms typically used of the great sages, as wise, virtuous, and physically beautiful (*VC* 1.19.1–20.1). Constantine's extraordinary qualities are said to have aroused the jealousy of the emperors, who plotted against him as Pharaoh plotted against Moses; but Constantine was saved through timely divine intervention:

> The young man perceived this, and when for a first time and a second time the plots were made known to him through divine inspiration he saved himself by fleeing, in this way too continuing to replicate the great prophet Moses. God worked with him in all of it, arranging things so that he would be present to receive the succession from his father. [82]

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[80] *VC* 1.13-18. Eusebius does not actually say that Constantius was a Christian, but he comes very close, saying that he "honored" God, was "on friendly terms with the God over all", "consecrated his whole household to the one God of the Universe", and so on. Eusebius may exaggerate Constantius' leniency toward the Christians; Lactantius acknowledges that he destroyed churches, "in order not to seem to subvert the commands of his superiors" (ne dissentire a maiorum praeceptis videretur (*De Mortibus Persecutorum* 15.7)).

[81] Συνῆν μὲν γὰρ οὗτος τοῖς τῆς βασιλείας κοινωνοῖς, καὶ μέσοις αὐτοῖς, ὡς εἴρηται, κατ' αὐτὸν ἐκεῖνον τὸν παλαιὸν τοῦ θεοῦ προφήτην τὰς διατριβὰς ἐποιεῖτο (*VC* 1.19.1).

[82] ὃ δὴ συναισθόμενος ὁ νεανίας, ἐπεὶ καὶ πρῶτον αὐτῷ καὶ δεύτερον κατάφωρα θεοῦ συμπρνεύσει τὰ τῆς ἐπιβουλῆς ἐγίγνετο, φυγῇ τὴν σωτηρίαν ἐπορίζετο κἀν τούτῳ τοῦ

Constantius' deathbed scene is then repeated, with Constantine arriving, to his father's great joy, at the last moment.[83]

In the next major episode that Eusebius relates, Constantine himself is made to discover the underlying truth that his father's life and death illustrate, namely that divine retribution and reward are in the hands of the god of the Christians. Constantine prepares to overthrow Maxentius, in order, as Eusebius says, to free Rome from slavery to a tyrant. Intimidated by the sorcery that he knew Maxentius would employ against him, Constantine determined to enlist the most powerful god that he could find (*VC* 1.26-27). His search for this "secret weapon" began with a mental review of the careers of his predecessors. Eusebius has already prepared the reader for this scene by his emphasis in the prologue on divine justice, by his references to the calamitous lives and deaths of the persecuting tetrarchs, and by the lengthy digression on the good fortune of the god-fearing Constantius.

> So he pondered what sort of god he ought to enlist to support him, and while he was thinking an idea occurred to him. He realized that of the many who had formerly aspired to power some had fixed their hopes on a multitude of gods and had worshiped them with libations, sacrifices and dedications; they had been deceived at first by welcome predictions and oracles that made auspicious promises but had met quite inauspicious ends, and none of their gods stood by them to ward off divine punishment. Only his own father had taken the opposite path and condemned their error: throughout his whole life he honored the god who transcends the universe and found him to be a savior and defender of his realm and a provider of every good thing. He discerned this for himself and

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μεγάλου προφήτου Μωϋσέως τὸ μίμημα διασῴζων. τὸ δὲ πᾶν αὐτῷ συνέπραττεν ὁ θεός, τῇ τοῦ πατρὸς διαδοχῇ προμηθούμενος αὐτὸν παρεῖναι (*VC* 1.20.2).

[83] *VC* 1.21. In fact the events were much less dramatic. Constantine arrived as his father was preparing to cross from Boulogne to Britain for a military campaign against the Picts, during which he died at York. See *Panegyrici Latini* 6(7).7.1, *Origo Constantini* 4, and Barnes 1981, 27.

> thought it through logically, how those who had relied on a variety of gods had stumbled into a variety of disasters so that they were left with neither family nor offspring nor root nor name nor memory among men, but his father's god had given his father clear and abundant signs of his power. Furthermore, those who had already taken the field against the tyrant had drawn up their battle lines with an abundance of gods but had submitted to shameful ends – he looked at this fact from every angle. One of them had retreated in disgrace without engaging the enemy, and the other had been murdered in his own camp like any commoner. After reasoning through all of this in his mind, he came to the conclusion that to follow idly after gods who do not exist and to wander away from the truth in the face of such a compelling argument would be sheer folly, and he decided that he ought to honor his father's god alone.[84]

Eusebius dwells on this picture of Constantine reasoning his way toward Christianity. He takes him through the symmetrical comparison of Constantius and his colleagues twice, beginning in each case with the unfortunate polytheists, recipients of divine retribution, whom he then contrasts with his fortunate, monotheistic father, the recipient of divine reward. Next Eusebius shows Constantine considering the failure of the (polytheistic) emperors who had already attempted to oust Maxentius but failed, ending ominously with the assassination of the emperor Severus. The comparative formula that

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[84] ἐννοεῖ δῆτα ὁποῖον δέοι θεὸν βοηθὸν ἐπιγράψασθαι, ζητοῦντι δ' αὐτῷ ἔννοιά τις ὑπεισῆλθεν, ὡς πλειόνων πρότερον τῆς ἀρχῆς ἐφαψαμένων οἱ μὲν πλείοσι θεοῦς τὰς σφῶν αὐτῶν ἀναρτήσαντες ἐλπίδας, λοιβαῖς τε καὶ θυσίαις καὶ ἀναθήμασι τούτοις θεραπεύσαντες, ἀπατηθέντες τὰ πρῶτα διὰ μαντειῶν καχαρισμένων χρησμῶν τε τὰ αἴσια ἀπαγγελλομένων αὐτοῖς τέλος οὐκ αἴσιον εὕραντο, οὐδέ τις θεῶν πρὸς τὸ μὴ θεηλάτοις ὑποβληθῆναι καταστροφαῖς δεξιὸς αὐτοῖς παρέστη, μόνον δὲ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ πατέρα τὴν ἐναντίαν ἐκείνοις τραπέντα τῶν μὲν πλάνην καταγνῶναι, αὐτὸν δὲ τὸν ἐπέκεινα τῶν ὅλων θεόν, διὰ πάσης τιμήσαντα ζωῆς, σωτῆρα καὶ φύλακα τῆς βασιλείας ἀγαθοῦ τε παντὸς χορηγὸν εὕρασθαι. ταῦτα παρ' ἑαυτῷ διακρίνας εὖ τε λογισάμενος, ὡς οἱ μὲν πλήθει θεῶν ἐπιθαρρήσαντες καὶ πλείοσιν ἐπιπεπτώκασιν ὀλέθροις, ὡς μηδὲ γένος μηδὲ φυὴν μὴ ῥίζαν αὐτοῖς, μηδ' ὄνομα μηδὲ μνήμην ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἀπολειφθῆναι, ὁ δὲ πατρῷος αὐτῷ θεὸς τῆς αὐτοῦ δυνάμεως ἐναργῆ καὶ πάμπολλα δείγματα εἴη δεδωκὼς τῷ αὐτοῦ πατρί, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς ἤδη καταστρατεύσαντας πρότερον τοῦ τυράννου διασκεψάμενος σὺν πλήθει μὲν θεῶν τὴν παράταξιν πεποιημένους αἰσχρὸν δὲ τέλος ὑπομείναντας· ὁ μὲν γὰρ αὐτῶν σὺν αἰσχύνῃ τῆς συμβολῆς ἄπρακτος ἀνεχώρει, ὁ δὲ καὶ μέσοις αὐτοῖς τοῖς στρατεύμασι κατασφαγεὶς πάρεργον ἐγένετο θανάτου· ταῦτ' οὖν πάντα συναγαγὼν τῇ διανοίᾳ τὸ μὲν περὶ τοὺς μηθὲν ὄντας θεοὺς ματαιάζειν καὶ μετὰ τοσοῦτον ἔλεγχον ἀποπλανᾶσθαι μωρίας ἔργον ὑπελάμβανε, τὸν δὲ πατρῷον τιμᾶν μόνον ᾤετο δεῖν θεόν (*VC* 1.27.2-3).

Eusebius has set up is left open-ended in this case: the principle of divine punishment is demonstrated, but there is no Constantius-figure to illustrate the corresponding principle of divine reward. Constantine decides to fill that role himself, however, and the narration of the campaign will provide the second element of the comparison.

Eusebius has presented the first stage of Constantine's conversion as a rational process, using ἐννοήσας, ἐννοεῖ, ἐννοιά, διακρίνας, λογισάμενος, διασκεψάμενος and συναγαγὼν τῇ διανοίᾳ to describe Constantine's mental activity and referring to the comparison of Constantius with the other tetrarchs as a proof, ἔλεγχον. Having reached the conclusion that he should enlist his father's god, Constantine still needs (somewhat inexplicably) to find out the identity of that god. This information is granted to him in three stages. First he is given a miraculous vision, the famous cross of light in the sky with the caption "By this conquer" (*VC* 1.28.2). While pondering this vision he falls asleep, and in a dream he is visited by Christ (Eusebius names him, but he doesn't seem to have named himself in the dream), who shows him the cross again and tells him to make a copy of it to carry into battle. When he awakes, Constantine gives instructions for making the cross-shaped talisman; he also summons some men, presumably priests, who answer his questions about both the god and the sign that have been revealed to him.

> They said that the god was the only-begotten son of the one and only God, and that the sign that had appeared was a symbol of immortality and a trophy of the victory over death that he won when he came to earth. They taught him the

> reasons for his coming and accurately expounded how he had accommodated himself to mankind.[85]

The final stage of this conversion story is Constantine's evaluation of the teaching he has just received:

> He listened studiously to their words, and was awestruck at the glimpse of God that he had been granted. He compared the heavenly vision with the interpretation that he was hearing, and he became firmly convinced in his mind that it was God who had taught him the knowledge of these things. He resolved in that moment to devote himself to the divinely inspired texts; he also decided that he should take priests of God for his counselors and honor the God he had seen with all due worship.[86]

The priests' teaching takes Constantine beyond the lesson of divine retribution, but that simple truth, deduced by Constantine from the events of recent history with no direction from any teacher, is presented as his entry-point into the faith.[87]

Eusebius says that in later years Constantine showed him the *labarum* and told him the story of the vision and the dream (*VC* 1.28, 1.30, 1.32.1). He does not claim that Constantine told him that in the moments or hours preceding the vision he was contemplating the workings of divine justice in recent history in order to choose a deity to follow. We know that Eusebius' access to the emperor was limited; in all likelihood he saw a later version of the *labarum* and heard Constantine's customary story about the

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[85] οἱ δὲ τὸν μὲν εἶναι θεὸν ἔφασαν θεοῦ τοῦ ἑνος καὶ μόνου μονογενῆ παῖδα, τὸ δὲ σημεῖον τὸ φανὲν σύμβολον μὲν ἀθανσίας εἶναι, τρόπαιον δ ὑπάρχειν τῆς κατὰ τοῦ θανάτου νίκης, ἣν ἐποιήσατό ποτε παρελθὼν ἐπὶ γῆς, ἐδίδασκόν τε τὰς τῆς παρόδου αἰτίας, τὸν ἀκριβῆ λόγον αὐτῷ τῆς κατ ἀνθρώπους οἰκονομίας ὑποτιθέμενοι (*VC* 1.32.2).

[86] ὁ δὲ καὶ τούτοις μὲν ἐμαθητεύετο τοῖς λόγοις, θαῦμα δ' εἶχε τῆς ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτῷ παραδοθείσης θεοφανείας, συμβάλλων τε τὴν οὐράνιον ὄψιν τῇ τῶν λεγομένων ἑρμηνείᾳ τὴν διάνοιαν ἐστηρίζετο, θεοδίδακτον αὐτῷ τὴν τούτων γνῶσιν παρεῖναι πειθόμενος. καὶ αὐτὸς δ' ἤδη τοῖς ἐνθέοις ἀναγνώσμασι προσέχειν ἠξίου. καὶ δὴ τοὺς τοῦ θεοῦ ἱερέας παρέδρους αὐτῷ ποιησάμενος τὸν ὀφθέντα θεὸν πάσαις δεῖν ᾤετο θεραπείαις τιμᾶν (*VC* 1.32.3).

[87] See Cameron 2000 on the philosophical "simplicity" attributed to Constantine by Eusebius in this episode.

vision and the construction of the original during a sort of tour of the palace on one of the occasions when Constantine entertained a large group of clergymen.[88] Elsewhere in *VC* Eusebius relates another story that he also heard from Constantine, doubtless on the same occasion, about the miraculous powers of the *labarum* to protect its bearer in battle (*VC* 2.8.2-9.3). The information about the decision to follow the god of the Christians on the basis of the argument from recent history comes from some other source; Eusebius may very well have attached it to the story of the vision for dramatic effect.

But whether the time and place of the reasoning process are accurate or not, Eusebius is correct in attributing this line of thought to Constantine. Eusebius knew that for Constantine retributive logic was a key to understanding the events of his lifetime and a persuasive argument for the truth of Christianity, because Constantine used it in his own propaganda, having in all likelihood derived it from the writing of Lactantius. In his Letter to the Provincials of Palestine, the first Constantinian document cited in *VC*, Constantine devotes three paragraphs to the argument (*VC* 2.24-27). In the following excerpt Constantine writes in the vein of a moralizing universal historian:

> If anyone were to retrace in his mind the course of history from its beginning till the present day and thoughtfully examine the events of any period whatever, he would find that all those who laid a just and good foundation for their deeds also brought their efforts to a good conclusion and from a sweet root, so to speak, gathered sweet fruit. It would also be apparent that those who committed crimes of injustice were repaid exactly as they deserved, whether they opposed the Almighty in their mindless rage or took an irreligious view of the human race

[88] See Barnes 1981, 265-67, on Eusebius' limited acquaintance with Constantine. Barnes suggests that Eusebius heard the story of the vision at the time of the Council of Nicaea and that he "need not have been either the unique or a solitary recipient of this narration" (Barnes 1981, 266).

> and for that reason became guilty of exiling citizens, depriving them of their rights, confiscating their belongings, murdering them, and many other such crimes, without ever changing their ways or turning their mind toward better things.[89]

The theme appears in the Letter to the Provincials of the East, as well, where Constantine explicitly contrasts his father's virtue with the cruelty of the other tetrarchs:

> I considered the previous emperors to be extremely cruel, on account of their savage character; only my father undertook deeds of kindness and called on the savior God with remarkable piety in everything he did. All the others were sick in their minds and pursued savagery rather than gentleness.[90]

Constantine does not mention his father's good fortune specifically in this letter, but he does describe the punishment of the persecutors: "Those perpetrators of foul deeds are gone now; they have died a shameful death and been given over to eternal torment in the depths of Acheron. They became entangled in wars that destroyed bonds of kinship, and have left behind neither name nor family of their own."[91] In Constantine's letter to

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[89] Εἰ γ' οὖν τις εἰς τοὺς ἄνωθεν εἰς δεῦρο παρατείνοντας χρόνους ἀναδράμοι τῷ νῷ καὶ τὰς πώποτε γενομένας πράξεις κατίδοι τῷ λογισμῷ, πάντας ἄν εὕροι τοὺς μὲν ὅσοι δικαίαν καὶ ἀγαθὴν προκατεβάλοντο τῶν πραγμάτων κρηπῖδα εἰς ἀγαθὸν καὶ προαγαγόντας τὰς ἐγχειρήσεις πέρας, καὶ οἷον ἀπὸ ῥίζης τινὸς ἡδείας κομισαμένους καὶ τὸν καρπὸν γλυκύν, τοὺς δὲ ἀδίκοις ἐπιχειρήσαντας τόλμαις καὶ ἢ πρὸς τὸ κρεῖττον ἀνοήτως ἐκμανέντας ἢ πρὸς τὸ ἀνθρώπινον γένος λογισμὸν ὅσιον μηδένα λαβόντας, ἀλλὰ φυγὰς ἀτιμίας δημεύσεις σφαγὰς τοιαῦτα πολλὰ τολμήσαντας, καὶ οὐδὲ μεταμεληθέντας ποτὲ οὐδὲ τὸν νοῦν ἐπιστρέψαντας πρὸς τὰ καλλίω, ἴσων καὶ τῶν ἀμοιβίων τυχόντας (*VC* 2.25).

[90] Ἔσχον ἔγωγε τοὺς πρὸ τούτου γενομένους αὐτοκράτορας διὰ τὸ τῶν τρόπων ἄγριον ἀποσκλήρους, μόνος δ' ὁ πατὴρ ὁ ἐμὸς ἡμερότητος ἔργα μετεχειρίζετο, μετὰ θαυμαστῆς εὐλαβείας ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἑαυτοῦ πράξεσι τὸν σωτῆρα θεὸν ἐπικαλούμενος. ὅσοι δὲ λοιποί, οὐχ ὑγιαίνοντες τὰς φρένας ἀγριότητος μᾶλλον ἢ πραότητος ἐπεμέλοντο... (*VC* 2.49).

[91] οἴχονται λοιπὸν καὶ ἐκεῖνοι οἱ τοῦ μύσους αὐθένται, πρὸς διηνεκῆ κόλασιν τοῖς Ἀχέροντος βαράθροις ἐκδοθέντες, σὺν αἰσχρῷ τέλει. πολέμοις γὰρ ἐμφυλίοις καταμιγέντες οὔτ' ὄνομα οὔτε γένος αὐτῶν καταλελοίπασιν (*VC* 2.54). In exploiting the theme of divine justice in these documents Constantine was following the precedent set by the edicts of Maximinus Daia that rationalized first the persecution and then the relaxation of the persecution of the Christians with the logic of divine retribution. Eusebius devotes most of *HE* 9 to these documents. As one scholar says, Constantine's letter to the provincials of Palestine "turns the previous official line upside down" (Trompf 2000, 124).

Shapur II, king of Persia, he actually cites the fate of the polytheist Valerian, captured and humiliated by the Persians under Shapur I, as evidence for monotheism (*VC* 4.11).

By having Constantine discern for himself the pattern of divine retribution and reward in the events of the tetrarchy and thereby find his own way into the church, Eusebius makes Constantine a model for the "ideal reader" of *VC*. There are in *VC* two versions of the argument for Christianity based on retributive logic. One compares the persecutors to Constantius, who declined to actively persecute the Christians in his territory and alone among his colleagues was granted a peaceful death. The other version compares the persecutors to Constantine, who made war on the persecuting emperors and was granted victory and a long, successful reign. The latter form is the more convincing, in that Constantine was the first openly Christian emperor and so more clearly deserving of reward from the Christian God.[92] That form of the argument is of course unavailable to Constantine himself, as it is not valid until after his death, since, as Eusebius says, no one can be considered blessed until he dies a blessed death.[93] So within the narrative of *VC* the proof of God's concern for justice is always the blessed life and death of Constantine's father. Eusebius brackets *VC*, however, with the form of the argument that makes the life and death of Constantine the proof of divine

[92] Constantine as the first openly Christian emperor: *VC* 1.4, 4.75.

[93] A bit of traditional wisdom in *VC*'s prologue: "...the present moment bids me pour out a chorus of praises of the truly blessed one. It was impossible to do this before now, since we are told not to call any man blessed before his death on account of the vicissitudes of life." ...τοῦ καιροῦ λοιπὸν ἐπιτρέποντος ἀκωλύτως παντοίαις φωναῖς τὸν ὡς ἀληθῶς μακάριον ἀνυμνεῖν, ὅτι μὴ τοῦτο πράττειν ἐξῆν πρὸ τούτου, τῷ μὴ μακαρίζειν ἄνδρα πρὸ τελευτῆς διὰ τὸ τῆς τοῦ βίου τροπῆς ἄδηλον παρηγγέλθαι (*VC* 1.11.2). *Cf.* the story of Solon's encounter with Croesus (Herodotus 1.32, Plutarch, *Life of Solon* 27.7); see also *Sirach* 11.28, πρὸ τελευτῆς μὴ μακάριζε μηδένα....

justice, citing it, as we have seen, with much fanfare in the prologue and repeating it at the end as follows:

> The God over all, by making us eye-witnesses of these things in the case of Constantine, the only one in history to have been openly displayed as a Christian, gave evidence of how great a distinction he makes between those who have resolved to honor him and his Christ and those who have chosen the opposite course. The latter in their eagerness to make war on his church made him their enemy, and the destruction of their lives in each case gave visible proof of their enmity toward God. In the same way he has made the death of Constantine, which was manifest to all, the token of his intimacy with God. Constantine alone among Roman rulers has honored God the ruler of all with the utmost piety, he alone has boldly proclaimed the word of Christ to everyone, he alone has honored God's church like none other in history, he alone has demolished every falsehood of polytheism and refuted every form of idolatry; in sum, he alone has been deemed worthy in life itself and after death of such blessings as no one could be said to have received among Greeks or barbarians or among those Romans of former times, since in all of history right up to the present there is no record of anyone like him.[94]

With these final sentences Eusebius places his reader in a position analogous to that in which he placed Constantine as he sat in his tent on the battlefield in 312 and reviewed events of recent history in his mind, looking for the pattern of divine action behind the life stories of his father and the other tetrarchs. Constantine was able, through his superior wisdom, to reason his way toward the truth by himself. Eusebius'

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[94] Ταῦθ' ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς δείξας ὀφθαλμοῖς ἐπὶ μόνῳ τῶν πώποτε Χριστιανῷ διαφανῶς ἀποδειχθέντι Κωνσταντίνῳ ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων θεός, ὁπόσον ἦν ἄρα αὐτῷ τὸ διάφορον παρεστήσατο τῶν αὐτόν τε καὶ τὸν Χριστὸν αὐτοῦ σέβειν ἠξιωμένων τῶν τε τὴν ἐναντίαν ἑλομένων, οἳ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν αὐτοῦ πολεμεῖν ὡρμηκότες αὐτὸν αὐτοῖς ἐχθρὸν καὶ πολέμιον κατεστήσαντο, τῆς ἐφ' ἑκάστῳ τοῦ βίου καταστροφῆς ἐναργῆ τὸν ἔλεγχον τῆς αὐτῶν θεοεχθρίας ἐνδειξαμένης, ὥσπερ οὖν τῆς θεοφιλίας τὰ ἐχέγγυα τὸ Κωνσταντίνου τοῖς πᾶσι φανερὸν κατέστησε τέλος, μόνου μὲν Ῥωμαίων βασιλέων τὸν παμβασιλέα θεὸν ὑπερβολῇ θεοσεβείας τετιμηκότος, μόνου δὲ τοῖς πᾶσι πεπαρρησιασμένως τὸν τοῦ Χριστοῦ κηρύξαντος λόγον, μόνου τ' ἐκκλησίαν αὐτοῦ ὡς οὐδ' ἕτερος τῶν ἐξ αἰῶνος δοξάσαντος, μόνου τε πᾶσαν πολύθεον πλάνην καθελόντος, πάντα τε τρόπον εἰδωλολατρίας ἀπελέγξαντος, καὶ δὴ καὶ μόνου τοιούτων ἠξιωμένου ἐν αὐτῇ τε ζωῇ καὶ μετὰ θάνατον, οἷων οὐκ ἄν τις τυχόντα οἱός τ' ἂν γένοιτο ἐξειπεῖν τινα οὔτε παρ' Ἕλλησιν οὔτε παρὰ βαρβάροις οὐδέ γε παρ' αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἀνωτάτω Ῥωμαίοις, ὡς οὐδενὸς τοιούτου τινὸς εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ παντὸς αἰῶνος μνημονευομένου (*VC* 4.74-75).

reader, not being a philosopher-king, may be incapable of such powers of reasoning on his own, even with the advantage of having seen the amazing life and death of the first openly Christian emperor. Constantine was then granted divine revelation – a vision and a dream – to bring him further; this also may not be granted to the reader. In the end Constantine sought the help of professional clergy to explain things to him clearly through scriptural exegesis. Eusebius has played the role of these clergymen for the reader, by providing in the text of *VC* the hermeneutic key for perceiving the message of divine justice that lies behind the life of Constantine. Eusebius has also provided a model for the reader's response in his account of the emperor's response to the words of the clergymen: τούτοις μὲν ἐμαθητεύετο τοῖς λόγοις, he listened studiously to these words (*VC* 1.32.3).

After the conversion episode, there is a digression on the crimes of Maxentius, parallel to the section on the virtues of Constantius. Maxentius is characterized as a tyrant by means of the typical accusations of rape, murder, and sorcery (*VC* 1.33-36). Constantine can thus be presented as "pursuing on behalf of the Romans the benefits of the freedom that they had inherited from their ancestors," ...Ῥωμαίοις τὰ τῆς ἐκ προγόνων ἐλευθερίας προμνώμενος (*VC* 1.37.1). His success in the battles in Italy is attributed to his "alliance with God."[95] With the account of the battle of the Milvian Bridge the Moses comparison is reintroduced.[96] Besides the explicit comparison with Moses, Eusebius also makes implicit references in this passage to two archetypal stories

[95] ὁ τῆς ἐκ θεοῦ συμμαχίας ἀνημμένος βασιλεὺς ἐπιὼν πρώτῃ καὶ δευτέρᾳ καὶ τρίτῃ τοῦ τυράννου παρατάξει εὖ μάλα τε πάσας ἐξ αὐτῆς πρώτης ὁρμῆς χειρωσάμενος... (*VC* 1.37.2).
[96] *VC* 1.38, quoted on pp.44-5 *supra*.

of retribution, one Hellenic and one biblical. In choosing the version of the story that involves the collapse of a bridge of boats over the Tiber, Eusebius makes a veiled reference to Xerxes' bridging of the Hellespont, a symptom of the *hybris* for which he was punished at Salamis. And in saying that Maxentius "engineered a device for his own destruction" Eusebius alludes to Haman, minister of that same Xerxes, who in the story of Esther was notoriously hanged on the gallows he had secretly set up for Mordecai (*Esther* 5.14, 7.9-10). Maxentius is again described as a tyrant, which links this passage with the comparison at 1.12. In comparing Constantine with Moses Eusebius has managed to equate three emperors with Pharaoh, the prototypical tyrant: Diocletian and Galerius, whose palace Constantine fled as Moses fled Pharaoh's, and Maxentius, whose drowning was a victory for Constantine as Pharaoh's drowning was for Moses. In the next major episode after this one, Licinius will also be characterized as a tyrant who succumbs to God's judgment administered by Constantine.

Eusebius shared Constantine's understanding of the events of his time as reflecting the hand of God dispensing justice and reward. Like Plutarch and other Platonist writers, Eusebius had a religious view of the world that sought the explanation for mundane phenomena in eternal truths about the nature of the divine. For Plutarch, the truth behind the myth of Isis was instantiated any time the sun came out after a storm or a philosophically minded person spent a moment in contemplation. Countless events could be adduced by a Eusebius to show that God cared for his friends and

punished his foes, and so could any number of archetypal stories, biblical or Hellenic. In *VC* Eusebius aimed to add another archetype to the common repertoire.

CHAPTER TWO

Constantinus Philosophus

Eusebius' comparison of Moses and Constantine serves a double function. It is meant to reveal a truth about the deity, as has been discussed above; it is also, of course, meant to tell the reader something about Constantine. The Moses of Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica* is a philosopher-king – the founder and law-giver of the Jewish nation, a man of almost divine wisdom and piety, and the author of sophisticated philosophical literature. This was the approach that Philo, Josephus, and Clement had all taken to the career of Moses, and it had become a legitimate, though not universal, view among pagan writers as well.[1] It provides the template for Eusebius' interpretation of Constantine in *VC*. By opening the narrative of Constantine's life with a comparison of Moses and Constantine with respect not only to their function as tyrannicides but to their character, Eusebius signals his audience that his subject is to be a new philosopher-king. Extraordinary wisdom, piety, and access to the divine, and devotion to the life of the intellect, all typical characteristics in the literary accounts not just of Moses but of many Hellenic philosophers, are attributed to Constantine over and over in *VC* as Eusebius creates an image of Constantine as a Christian philosopher-king.[2]

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[1] See pp.37-8 *supra*.
[2] Cox 1983, a study of late antique philosopher biography, traces some of the history of the literary portrayal of philosophers. See especially pp.17-30.

The concept of the philosopher-king was problematic for the ancients – it is easy to forget that when Socrates introduces the idea in the *Republic* he is made to call it "highly paradoxical."[3] On the one hand, it was a truism that the philosopher kept himself aloof from worldly affairs; hence Socrates' insistence that the very idea of a philosopher also being a ruler was outrageous. On the other hand, not only was the sage-like ruler a commonplace of popular thought, as in the cases of Lycurgus, Solon, and Numa, but there are numerous instances of men who were primarily philosophers but were also involved in governance in some form or other, from Pythagoras, who was claimed as the founder of a political movement in Magna Graecia, to Apollonius of Tyana, who settled disputes for the cities of the eastern empire. The sense that the distinction between the philosophical and the political life was not at all precise is perhaps the reason that Socrates seems to protest too much about the absurdity of the notion that they should be merged. We find a well-developed theory of the philosophical ruler in Plutarch, who taught that the ideal ruler was a practical philosopher, able to achieve on a large, even world-wide, scale the benefits that the contemplative philosopher might help to bring about for a few. This is the theme of his *De Alexandri Magni Fortuna aut Virtute*: "If the philosophers pride themselves greatly on making the harsh and ignorant components of human nature gentle and harmonious, and if Alexander is known to have transformed tens of thousands of savage natures and

[3] ἀλλὰ τοῦτό ἐστιν, ὃ ἐμοὶ πάλαι ὄκνον ἐντίθησι λέγειν, ὁρῶντι ὡς πολὺ παρὰ δόξαν ῥηθήσεται (*Republic* 5.473e).

peoples, it is quite reasonable that he should be considered most philosophical."[4] Eusebius uses this Plutarchan model to describe the benefits of Constantine's reign in the speech for the *tricennalia* celebrations that we know as *De Laudibus Constantini*. In this speech Constantine is described as a philosopher and compared to Christ in his ability to reveal the divine to mankind; this ability is a result of his virtuous self-mastery and his attitude of dependence on God.[5] A long section on Constantine's disdain for worldly glories and pleasures ends with an image of Constantine as teacher, with all of his subjects for pupils:

> Because of all this, the sovereign, a student of divine matters and lofty in his thoughts, aims at things beyond this present life, calling upon the heavenly father and longing for his kingdom. Doing all things with piety he sets before his subjects, as though they were students of a good teacher, the divine knowledge of the great sovereign.[6]

Under Constantine "people everywhere have organized schools for the study of the holy writings to be instructed in the teachings that bring salvation"; Constantine is said to proclaim to all nations "discourses, teachings, and exhortations to a disciplined life of

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[4] εἰ τοίνυν μέγιστον μὲν οἱ φιλόσοφοι φρονοῦσιν ἐπὶ τῷ τὰ σκληρὰ καὶ ἀπαίδευτα τῶν ἠθῶν ἐξημεροῦν καὶ μεθαρμόζειν, μυρία δὲ φαίνεται γένη καὶ φύσεις θηριώδεις μεταβαλὼν Ἀλέξανδρος, εἰκότως ἂν φιλοσοφώτατος νομίζοιτο (*De Alexandri Magni Fortuna aut Virtute* 329a).

[5] *LC* 5 (1333d-1340a), esp. 5.4 (1336c): "He is the only truly philosophical ruler, for he knows himself, and he fully understands those gifts of every good thing that have been bestowed from outside himself, or rather from heaven." ἀληθῶς δὴ καὶ μόνος φιλόσοφος βασιλεύς οὗτος, ὁ ἑαυτὸν εἰδὼς, καὶ τὰς ἔξωθεν αὐτῷ, μᾶλλον δ' οὐρανόθεν ἐπαρδομένας παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ χορηγίας ἐξεπιστάμενος. For Constantine's reception of the speech see *VC* 4.46: "Listening to it, the friend of God seemed delighted; this was just how he described his reaction afterwards when he was dining with the bishops and welcoming them with every sign of respect." ...οὗ δὴ κατακροώμενος ὁ τῷ θεῷ φίλος γανυμένῳ ἐῴκει. Τοῦτο δ' οὖν αὐτὸ μετὰ τὴν ἀκρόασιν ἐξέφηνε, συμποσιάζων παροῦσι τοῖς ἐπισκόποις παντοίᾳ τ' αὐτοὺς τιμῇ φιλοφρονούμενος.

[6] τούτων δὴ ἕνεκα πάντων, ὁ τὰ θεῖα πεπαιδευμένος βασιλεὺς, καὶ τὰ μεγάλα φρονῶν, τοῦ παρόντος βίου τῶν κρειττόνων ἐφίεται, τὸν πατέρα καλῶν τὸν ἐπουράνιον, καὶ τὴν ἐκείνου βασιλείαν ποθῶν, πάντα τε σὺν εὐσεβείᾳ πράττων, καὶ τοῖς ὑπ' αὐτῷ ἀρχομένοις ὡς ὑπὸ διδασκάλῳ παιδευομένοις ἀγαθῷ, τὴν τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως θεογνωσίαν προβαλλόμενος (*LC* 5.8 (1340a)).

reverence toward God."[7] Like Plutarch in his description of universal enlightenment brought about by the rule of Alexander, Eusebius backs up his analysis with a few specific accomplishments of the reign; some of these are used again in *VC*, where many more details are added to the picture in the form of anecdotes and vignettes; descriptions of policies, laws, public works, and so on; and documents from Constantine's own hand. [8]

Like several of his predecessors in power Constantine promoted the image of himself as a philosophical ruler, or at least as an enthusiastic participant in the intellectual life of his day.[9] He patronized pagan philosophers and Christian teachers; he also became involved in the doctrinal disputes of the church not just as a referee but as an amateur theologian.[10] He delivered orations on theological topics, one of which has been preserved, the *Oratio ad Sanctorum Coetum*, a remarkable piece of Christian apologetics written either by or for Constantine.[11] Eusebius tells that when he himself

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[7] λόγων δ' ἱερῶν ἁπανταχοῦ διατριβὰς ἄνθρωποι συστησάμενοι, ὡς σωτηρίοις μαθήμασιν ἐκπαιδεύονται... (*LC* 10.2 (1372c)); λόγοι δ' οὖν καὶ μαθήματα καὶ προτροπαὶ σώφρονος καὶ θεοσεβοῦς βίου εἰς ἐξάκουστον πᾶσιν ἔθνεσι κηρύττονται, κηρύττει τε βασιλεὺς αὐτός... (*LC* 10.4 (1373a)).

[8] Eusebius had already applied the same formula to the career of Jesus and its aftermath in *PE* 1. Mortley argues that *PE* 1.4 shows the direct influence of Plutarch's *De Alexandri Magni Fortuna aut Virtute* (Mortley 1996, 156-59).

[9] "By the standards of his time, Constantine was an educated man..." (Barnes 1981, 74). Barnes argues convincingly against the commonly held notion that Constantine was an uneducated soldier.

[10] For Constantine's patronage of Sopater, a pupil of Iamblichus, and of Hermogenes, an erudite pagan, see Millar 1977, 99-101. Alföldi (1969, 99) points out that under Constantine a priest of the Eleusinian mysteries traveled to Egypt by imperial post.

[11] The question of the authenticity of the *Oratio* continues to be debated. Baynes (1972, 56), who was as familiar as any modern scholar with the writings of Constantine, was skeptical, but Barnes (1981, 73-75) and Lane Fox (1986, 627-9) accept it as genuine. More recently, Geymonat (2001) has argued that the text was written in the years shortly after the reign of Julian by a new convert eager to reclaim classical culture for Christianity. I am inclined to accept the essential authenticity of the text and the arguments of Lane Fox as to the circumstances of delivery. But the point is not central to my thesis; I use the *Oratio* as

was delivering a speech on the newly founded Church of the Holy Sepulchre for a crowd at court Constantine not only respectfully stood and listened attentively to the whole thing but offered a response (*VC* 4.33.1-2). A letter from Constantine to Eusebius about a text that the latter had sent to court is worth quoting in full. It shows the emperor's enthusiasm for his role as patron of scholars and his sophistication about the obstacles to self-expression that Eusebius faced: his sense of the ineffability of truth on the one hand and the vagaries of the translation process on the other.

> It is an enormous undertaking and greater than all power of expression to speak worthily of the mysteries of Christ and to explain appropriately the controversy about Easter and the origin of the feast and its beneficial and painful fulfillment. For it is humanly impossible to express the divine in a worthy manner, even for the intellectually adept. Nonetheless with great admiration for your love of learning and your ambition I read your book myself with pleasure, and as you wished I ordered that it be made available to the general public, or at least to those who genuinely care about the worship of the divine. Therefore, seeing with what great joy we receive such gifts from your sagacity, exert yourself to make us glad with more frequent writings, in which you acknowledge that you have been nurtured (we urge you already running, as the saying goes, toward your usual pursuits). Such great confidence shows that at any rate you have found the one who translates your works into the Roman tongue not unworthy of your writings, even though such a translation cannot for the most part worthily support the refinements of your expression.[12]

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merely one example among many illustrating Constantine's self-presentation as an emperor with intellectual interests.

[12] Τὸ μὲν ἐγχείρημα μέγιστον καὶ πάσης λόγων δυνάμεως κρεῖττον Χριστοῦ μυστήρια κατ' ἀξίαν εἰπεῖν τὴν τε τοῦ πάσχα ἀντιλογίαν τε καὶ γενέσιν, λυσιτελῆ τε καὶ ἐπίπονον τελεσιουργίαν, ἑρμηνεῦσαι τὸν προσήκοντα τρόπον· τὸ γὰρ θεῖον ἀνθρώποις ἀδύνατον κατ' ἀξίαν φράσαι, καὶ τοῖς νοῆσαι δυνατοῖς. πλὴν ὅμως ὑπερθαυμάσας σε τῆς φιλομαθείας τε καὶ φιλοτιμίας, αὐτός τε τὸ βιβλίον ἀνέγνων ἀσμένως, καὶ τοῖς πλείοσιν, οἵ γε τῇ περὶ τὸ θεῖον λατρείᾳ γνησίως προσανέχουσι, καθὰ ἐβουλήθης, ἐκδοθῆναι προσέταξα. συνορῶν τοίνυν μεθ' ὅσης θυμηδίας τὰ τοιαῦτα παρὰ τῆς σῆς ἀγχινοίας δῶρα λαμβάνομεν, συνεχεστέροις ἡμᾶς λόγοις εὐφραίνειν, οἷς ἐντεθράφθαι σαυτὸν ὁμολογεῖς, προθυμήθητι· (θέοντα γάρ σε, τὸ τοῦ λόγου, πρὸς τὰ συνήθη σπουδάσματα παρορμῶμεν), ὅπου γε καὶ τὸν εἰς τὴν Ῥωμαίων τοὺς σοὺς πόνους μεταρρυθμίζοντα γλῶτταν οὐκ ἀνάξιον ηὑρῆσθαί σοι τῶν συγγραμμάτων ἡ τοσαύτη πεποίθησις δείκνυσιν, εἰ καὶ τὰ μάλιστα τὰ καλὰ τῶν λόγων ἡ τοιαύτη ἑρμηνεία ὑφίστασθαι κατ' ἀξίαν ἀδυνάτως ἔχει (*VC* 4.35).

Constantine was familiar with the translating process: Eusebius says that he wrote his speeches in Latin and had them translated (*VC* 4.32). Constantine knew Greek well enough to participate in the discussions at the council of Nicaea in Greek (*VC* 3.13.2), and this letter suggests a touch of pride on his part that he is able to appreciate subtleties in Eusebius' untranslated work.

In Plutarch's *De Alexandri Magni Fortuna aut Virtute* the work of the philosophical ruler is to convert great numbers of people to a civilized, that is, Hellenic, way of life: Alexander's world conquest means the elimination of immoral barbaric customs such as incest and cannibalism as the barbarians learn better ways in newly founded Greek cities with Greek laws (328c-329a). But Plutarch does not attempt to claim that Alexander spent much time with a more contemplative form of philosophy: his Alexander is in a sense excused from the day-to-day work of the philosopher – teaching, learning, discussing – because his work as a ruler is so important. His personal philosophic activity is limited to a fairly abstemious lifestyle, a respect for philosophers, and the self-awareness to understand what he is accomplishing and what he is giving up. Plutarch interprets his remark that if he weren't Alexander he would be Diogenes as meaning that he would be a contemplative philosopher if he weren't a practical one – and judges that he has chosen well (Plutarch, *De Alexandri Magni Fortuna aut Virtute* 331f). Eusebius likewise interprets political and military actions by Constantine as a form of instruction rather than coercion. But his Constantine is much more devoted to the life of the intellect than is Plutarch's Alexander, and there is much about his

characterization that is reminiscent of the "full-time" philosophers whose lives are described in ancient philosopher biographies. This was not new territory for Eusebius: he had already incorporated into Book 6 of his *Historia Ecclesiastica* an account of the life of Origen employing many of the stereotypical characteristics of the philosopher: Origen is an avid student and tireless teacher, he is virtuous and pious, he is free from worldly ambition, and he faces opposition, as followers of true wisdom do.[13]

The Constantine of *VC* is passionately devoted to discerning and teaching the truth about the deity. In Eusebius' day this was for many people at the heart of what it meant to be a philosopher.[14] Several works dealing with the lives of such religiously oriented thinkers appeared in the late third and early fourth centuries: Porphyry's accounts of the lives of Pythagoras and Plotinus, and Iamblichus' *De Vita Pythagorica*. One that had been written a century before, Philostratus' *De Vita Apollonii Tyanensis*, was still influential. These biographies of holy philosophers are the backdrop against which Eusebius' portrayal of Constantine as a philosophical ruler must be viewed. While direct borrowing is not for the most part evident, Eusebius does draw on a store of stereotypical characteristics of the philosopher that appear in these works and others, including Plato's Socratic works, the New Testament literature, and Diogenes Laertius' *Vitae Philosophorum*.

Eusebius writes *VC* in the tradition of moralizing biography best represented by Plutarch. In the prologue he announces both his methods and his goals in terms that are

[13] Patricia Cox has analyzed the *HE* account of Origen's life as a philosopher biography in *Biography in Late Antiquity*, ch.4.
[14] See Cox 1983, 17-19.

strongly reminiscent of two programmatic passages in Plutarch's *Vitae Parallelae*. His goal is moral improvement for himself, at least, and for readers who are susceptible to the awakening of a sort of Platonic *eros* for higher things upon reading "inspirational" biography: "all those in whom the representation of noble things awakens longing toward divine love," ...ἅπασιν οἷς ἡ τῶν καλῶν μίμησις πρὸς τὸν θεῖον ἔρωτα διεγείρει τὸν πόθον (*VC* 1.10.2). Biographies and histories that don't serve this purpose are worthless, however lengthy or polished. The same collocation of ideas appears in the opening of Plutarch's *De Vita Periclis*: scholars should not waste their love of learning on topics that aren't beneficial but should write about deeds of virtue, which have the power to arouse emulative desire in both the scholars and their readers (*De Vita Periclis* 1-2).

Eusebius describes his method in terms that are equally Plutarchan:

> The greatest stories about the thrice-blessed one, the stories of royal deeds – armies deployed and engaged in battles, deeds of valor, victories, trophies set up over enemies and all the triumphal processions he led, as well as his declarations in time of peace for the correction of public life and the benefit of each person, the imperial laws he enacted to improve civic life for his subjects, and many other contests for imperial prizes which have already been engraved in everybody's memory – these I have decided to pass over. The work that lies before me won't let me forget its purpose: to tell and record only those things that contribute to the life of intimacy with God.[15]

[15] Τὰ μὲν οὖν πλεῖστα καὶ βασιλικὰ τοῦ τρισμακαρίου διηγήματα, συμβολάς τε καὶ παρατάξεις πολέμων ἀριστείας τε καὶ νίκας καὶ τρόπαια τὰ κατ' ἐχθρῶν θριάμβους τε ὁπόσους ἤγαγε, τά τε κατ' εἰρήνην αὐτῳ πρὸς τὴν τῶν κοινῶν διόρθωσιν πρός τε τὸ συμφέρον ἑκάστου διωρισμένα νόμων τε διατάξεις, ἃς ἐπὶ λυσιτελείᾳ τῆς τῶν ἀρχομένων πολιτείας συνετάττετο, πλείστους τ' ἄλλους βασιλικῶν ἄθλων ἀγῶνας, τοὺς δὲ παρὰ τοῖς πᾶσι μνημονευομένους, παρήσειν μοι δοκῶ, τοῦ τῆς προκειμένης ἡμῖν πραγματείας σκοποῦ μόνα τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεοφιλῆ συντείνοντα βίον λέγειν τε καὶ γράφειν ὑποβάλλοντος (*VC* 1.11.1).

Eusebius promises to pass over military matters and legislation, but both are in fact important topics in *VC*. He may be said to misrepresent his project in this passage; the reason becomes apparent when we compare the passage from Plutarch's *De Vita Alexandri Magni* that is echoed here.[16]

> It is the life of Alexander the king, and of Caesar, who overthrew Pompey, that I am writing in this book, and the multitude of the deeds to be treated is so great that I shall make no other preface than to entreat my readers, in case I do not tell of all the famous actions of these men, nor even speak exhaustively at all in each particular case, but in epitome for the most part, not to complain. For it is not Histories that I am writing, but Lives; and in the most illustrious deeds there is not always a manifestation of virtue or vice, nay, a slight thing like a phrase or a jest often makes a greater revelation of character than battles where thousands fall, or the greatest armaments, or sieges of cities. Accordingly, just as painters get the likenesses in their portraits from the face and the expression of the eyes, wherein the character shows itself, but make very little account of the other parts of the body, so I must be permitted to devote myself rather to the signs of the soul in men, and by means of these to portray the life of each, leaving to others the description of their great contests. [17]

The resemblance between the two passages is strong enough to suggest deliberate imitation, particularly given that Eusebius very shortly before has compared

[16] Cameron and Hall in their commentary on this passage reasonably contend that a misstatement here is not necessarily a sign of a change in Eusebius' intention, *pace* Barnes (1989).

[17] Τὸν Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ βασιλέως βίον καὶ τοῦ Καίσαρος, ὑφ' οὗ κατελύθη Πομπήιος, ἐν τούτῳ τῷ βιβλίῳ γράφοντες, διὰ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ὑποκειμένων πράξεων οὐδὲν ἄλλο προεροῦμεν ἢ παραιτησόμεθα τοὺς ἀναγινώσκοντας, ἐὰν μὴ πάντα μηδὲ καθ' ἕκαστον ἐξειργασμένως τι τῶν περιβοήτων ἀπαγγέλλωμεν, ἀλλὰ ἐπιτέμνοντες τὰ πλεῖστα, μὴ συκοφαντεῖν. οὔτε γὰρ ἱστορίας γράφομεν, ἀλλὰ βίους, οὔτε ταῖς ἐπιφανεστάταις πράξεσι πάντως ἔνεστι δήλωσις ἀρετῆς ἢ κακίας, ἀλλὰ πρᾶγμα βραχὺ πολλάκις καὶ ῥῆμα καὶ παιδιά τις ἔμθασιν ἤθους ἐποίησε μᾶλλον ἢ μάχαι μυριόνεκροι καὶ παρατάξεις αἱ μέγισται καὶ πολιορκίαι πόλεων. ὥσπερ οὖν οἱ ζωγράφοι τὰς ὁμοιότητας ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου καὶ τῶν περὶ τὴν ὄψιν εἰδῶν, οἷς ἐμφαίνεται τὸ ἦθος, ἀναλαμβάνουσιν, ἐλάχιστα τῶν λοιπῶν μερῶν φροντίζοντες, οὕτως ἡμῖν δοτέον εἰς τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς σημεία μᾶλλον ἐνδύεσθαι καὶ διὰ τούτων εἰδοποιεῖν τὸν ἑκάστου βίον, ἐάσαντας ἑτέροις τὰ μεγέθη καὶ τοὺς ἀγῶνας (Plutarch, *De Vita Alexandri Magni* 1, tr. Perrin).

himself to a painter making a "verbal portrait" of Constantine.[18] Both authors are saying that the subject of their work is character, not events; both, in fact, overstate their case somewhat.[19] Official acts are included in the narratives of both authors, but they are supplemented when possible with the sorts of telling details to which Plutarch refers as "an expression or a jest." Anecdotes that end with a *bon mot* on the part of the subject of the biography are a favorite technique: these are numerous in *De Vita Alexandri Magni*. Such stories and vignettes are unfortunately rare in *VC*, but they are present. We will examine several below, including anecdotes about interactions between Constantine and members of his court, accounts of his private prayer rituals, and so on. It is likely that Eusebius included as many such stories as he had access to and thought appropriate. Eusebius selects his information carefully in order to convey a particular image of Constantine, but though he uses anecdotes that have a ring of intimacy whenever possible, he relies heavily on more public knowledge – accounts of building programs, laws, benefactions, destruction of temples, army regulations, and so on. To a great extent the letters of Constantine, which are full of idiosyncratic touches, play the revelatory role in *VC* that anecdotes play in *De Vita Alexandri*.

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[18] "In imitation of the mortal art of painting one must dedicate a verbal portrait to the memory of the friend of God." ἀναγκαῖον μιμήσει τῆς θνητῆς σκιαγραφίας τὴν διὰ λόγων εἰκόνα τῇ τοῦ θεοφιλοῦς αναθείναι μνήμῃ (*VC* 1.10.1). On the similarity between the Eusebian and Plutarchan passages see Mortley 1996, 176-7: "...one finds great similarity between this passage of the *Life* [*VC* 1.11.1] and the opening lines of Plutarch's *Life of Alexander the Great*, which may well lie behind the present passage as a mode [*sic*]... The two passages are very close: the concern is the *life* (βίος) of the subject; it will be necessary to pass over most of the great deeds on the battlefield or elsewhere; only that which casts light on the character of the individual will be used."

[19] Lamberton points this out in Plutarch's case (Lamberton 2001, 99-100).

For both Plutarch and Eusebius, any such detail when properly selected and narrated by the biographer is a clue to the subject's character. In a sense, the data of biography are symbols, mundane phenomena that reveal a more significant truth – the truth about an individual character. And it is through the accumulation of such details that the truth is gradually revealed, just as the judicious accumulation of information about myths and rituals reveals the truth behind popular religion in *De Iside et Osiride*. The ability of a story to illustrate the subject's character can for Plutarch be a reason to include it even if its historicity is doubtful, as he acknowledges in *De Vita Solonis*:

> As for his interview with Croesus, some think to prove by chronology that it is fictitious. But when a story is so famous and so well-attested, and, what is more to the point, when it comports so well with the character of Solon, and is so worthy of his magnanimity and wisdom, I do not propose to reject it out of deference to any chronological canons, so called, which thousands are to this day revising, without being able to bring their contradictions into any general agreement.[20]

Patricia Cox points out that when the biographer believes that the soul of his subject communes with the divine, the telling detail becomes especially heavily freighted with meaning. Referring to Porphyry's *Vitae* of Plotinus and Pythagoras and Eusebius' life of Origen, she writes, "Biographers like Porphyry and Eusebius...saw God at work in their heroes' lives. Thus when they set about to 'capture the gesture,'

[20] Τὴν δὲ πρὸς Κροῖσον ἔντευξιν αὐτοῦ δοκοῦσιν ἔνιοι τοῖς χρόνοις ὡς πεπλασμένην ἐλέγχειν. ἐγὼ δὲ λόγον ἔνδοξον οὕτω καὶ τοσούτους μάρτυρας ἔχοντα, καὶ ὃ μεῖζόν ἐστι, πρέποντα τῷ Σόλωνος ἤθει καὶ τῆς ἐκείνου μεγαλοφροσύνης καὶ σοφίας ἄξιον, οὗ μοι δοκῶ προήσεσθαι χρονικοῖς τισι λεγομένοις κανόσιν, οὓς μυρίοι διορθοῦντες ἄχρι σήμερον εἰς οὐδὲν αὐτοῖς ὁμολογούμενον δύνανται καταστῆσαι τὰς ἀντιλογίας (*Life of Solon* 27.1, tr. Perrin).

they were negotiating the intersection of the human and the divine."[21] This is just as true for *VC* as for Eusebius' account of Origen's life.

In what follows we will examine five areas in which Eusebius characterizes Constantine as a philosopher: his wisdom; his virtue and resulting access to the divine; his activity as a teacher; his conflict with Licinius, whom Eusebius casts in the role of a rival philosopher; and the account of his death. Passages from prior literary portrayals of philosophers will be cited as *comparanda*, with the goal of showing that Eusebius was working within a tradition to create a character that would resonate with readers as a holy philosopher, a person of spiritual and intellectual authority. Attention will be given to the paradox that sometimes results from the attempt to combine in one character the authority of a monarch with that of a philosopher, which by the terms of the stereotype derives from aloofness *vis-à-vis* political authority.

Wisdom

The most basic characteristic of the holy philosopher is his superior wisdom.[22] He is typically the intellectual superior of his peers from an early age, and throughout life his intellect is constantly at work. But there is always more at stake in his pursuit of wisdom than a reputation for intelligence: he must have a conviction that the wisdom he pursues is the *true* wisdom and that to turn aside from the path he has chosen would be

[21] Cox 1983, xi-xii.
[22] For discussion of the general comments in this paragraph see Cox 1983, 21-25.

perilous to his soul. And his wisdom typically gives him extraordinary insight into human nature.

The philosopher is usually portrayed as having mastered at an early age the educational challenges available to him, which he then left behind for pursuit of higher knowledge of some sort. Socrates in *Phaedo* tells Cebes that as a young man he was an avid student of physical science, but had abandoned those studies (Plato, *Phaedo* 96a-d). Moses is described by Philo as having easily mastered all the knowledge offered him by Egyptian, Assyrian, Chaldean and Greek teachers (Philo, *De Vita Mosis* 1.21-24). Apollonius, according to Philostratus, was gifted as a child with a remarkable memory and ability to concentrate; he also naturally spoke Attic Greek rather than the local Cappadocian dialect. His father hired a rhetor and various teachers of the different philosophical schools to teach him, and he mastered their teachings by age sixteen (Philostratus, *De Vita Apollonii* 1.7). Origen, according to Eusebius, mastered biblical and secular studies at an early age, becoming a teacher of both at about the age of eighteen (*HE* 6.2.7-3.4). Plotinus, according to Porphyry, was thoroughly versed in geometry, mechanics, optics, and music, though he did not teach on them. He had also mastered Stoic, Peripatetic, and Platonist philosophy and incorporated them in his own, original system (Porphyry, *De Vita Plotini* 14).

Eusebius' Constantine likewise was well educated in the traditional fashion in his youth. This point is stated explicitly at *VC* 1.19.2, where Eusebius says that Constantine distinguished himself by the excellence of his rhetorical education while

residing in Nicomedia at the court of Diocletian and Galerius. There is no reason to doubt that Constantine received a good education (focused, presumably, on Latin rather than Greek) during his time at Nicomedia.[23] His fondness for letter-writing and speech-making is evidence in favor; the only evidence against is the statement in *Origo Constantini* that he was untutored, but in fact this statement refers to the period before his stay in Nicomedia.[24] At Nicomedia he was being groomed as a possible successor to power, and tutoring from a respected scholar was a part of the traditional training of princes. The fact that Constantine received a traditional education before turning to Christianity is one of the ways in which he is a second Moses. The idea that Moses mastered all the lore of the Egyptians as a young man is mentioned by Stephen in his speech before the high priest in *Acts* and by Philo in his account of Moses as a philosopher (*Acts* 7.23; Philo, *De Vita Mosis* 1.21-24). For Philo, Moses' supposed mastery of Egyptian learning lent prestige to the books of the Pentateuch, which could thus be said to comprise the ancient wisdom of Egypt. When Eusebius first sets up the typology of Moses in *VC*, he says that "...God...caused the prophet Moses, still a mere child, to be reared in the heart of the tyrants' palace and to have a share in their wisdom" (*VC* 1.12.1). When he sketches the career of Constantine he says that "Constantine was in their midst...young and tender and blooming with youth; like that

[23] See Barnes 1981, 47ff., for the view that Constantine did receive an education at Nicomedia.
[24] "Having been scantily instructed in letters, he became a hostage with Diocletian and Galerius, and fought bravely under them in Asia" (*Origo Constantini* 2). *Cf*. the statement of Praxagoras, who wrote shortly after the death of Constantine: "Constantine was sent by his father to Diocletian in Nicomedia in order to receive his education..." (*FGrH* 219.2).

servant of God, he sat at the tyrants' hearth..."[25] He does not refer explicitly in this passage to Constantine's education at Nicomedia, but since every item of the description of Moses that he gives corresponds in some way to something similar in the life of Constantine, the idea that Constantine acquired at the court of "the tyrants" all the wisdom that a traditional education had to offer is strongly implied. Thus his later teaching will incorporate the wisdom of classical culture, along with the wisdom acquired by study of the scripture and directly revealed to him by God, just as Moses' teachings incorporated the wisdom of the Egyptians along with the revelations given to him on Mt. Sinai.

Traditional education is of course only the beginning of the philosopher's wisdom. At some point he will become dissatisfied with what he has learned and move to a higher level of knowledge, partly on his own and partly with the help of teachers whom he must seek out. The change typically involves a period of searching that leads to a conversion, which is then followed by a long period of training. Porphyry says that Plotinus "threw himself into the study of philosophy" (ὁρμῆσαι ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίαν) at age twenty-seven. He was directed to the teachers at Alexandria, but always came away disappointed until he heard Ammonius, whom he immediately recognized as the teacher he had been looking for. He studied with Ammonius for eleven years and then joined the emperor Gordian's Persian expedition, hoping to become a student of the philosophers of Persia and India; the plan seems to have been aborted along with the

[25] *VC* 1.12.2. For Greek text of this and the prior quotation see p.36 *supra*.

campaign (Porphyry, *De Vita Plotini* 3.7-23). Apollonius, according to Philostratus' account, at age fourteen already knew that he preferred a philosophic lifestyle but studied the teachings of various schools until at age sixteen, "given wings by some higher power" (πτερωθεὶς...ὑπό τινος κρείττονος), he abruptly adopted the lifestyle of a devout Pythagorean (Philostratus, *De Vita Apollonii* 1.7). A few years later he began a period of complete silence that lasted five years; shortly after that, he traveled east and studied with the Persian Magi and the Indian Brahmans (*De Vita Apollonii* 1.14; 1.18ff). This process of searching, conversion, and training is described by Eusebius for Constantine in the single episode of the battlefield conversion (*VC* 1.27-32). The process is thus unexpectedly condensed, but all the usual phases are adumbrated. Constantine searched for the true God with his intellect, was granted a vision and a dream, and turned to Christian teachers for instruction. Convinced that he had found the truth, he immediately became a student of the Christian school of thought and an adept of the Christian cult: "He resolved in that moment to devote himself to the divinely inspired texts; he also decided that he should take priests of God for his counselors and honor the God he had seen with all due worship."[26] Constantine's writings, as well as Eusebius' narrative, hereafter show him concerned with true wisdom, which he pursues by studying the scriptures, spending time in the company of priests and bishops, and submitting to instruction from them.[27]

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[26] *VC* 1.32.3. For Greek text see p. 57 *supra*.
[27] Studying the scriptures: *VC* 4.29.1; spending time with clergy: *VC* 1.42.1; submitting to instruction: *VC* 4.33.

A key component of the philosopher's wisdom is an uncanny ability to judge human nature.[28] One of the first remarkable feats, in Philostratus' account, performed by Apollonius after he adopted the character of a Pythagorean sage was to discern the false motives and criminal past of a supplicant at the temple of Asclepius (Philostratus, *De Vita Apollonii* 1.10). Porphyry says that Plotinus "had a surpassing degree of penetration into character"[29] and cites three instances: his detection of a thief among his slaves; his prediction that Polemon, one of the children that he was rearing in his home, would be "amorous and short-lived," which turned out to be the case; and his discernment of Porphyry's own suicidal thoughts (Porphyry, *De Vita Plotini* 11). The apostle Peter was able to discern that Ananias and Sapphira, two early converts to Christianity, had deceived him about an offering of money – an impressive event for those around him, since both of them fell dead as soon as Peter accused them (*Acts* 5.1-11).

Constantine likewise is shown as able to discern the hidden motives of others. In the first place, he chose the men who surrounded him for their good character. In the period immediately following the defeat of Maxentius, Eusebius says that Constantine began to surround himself with clergy. He emphasizes their humble appearance in order to highlight Constantine's wisdom: "So his companions, the men who shared a table with him, were of no account in their outward appearance, but just the opposite in his judgment. For he decided not to look on the man as most people see him but on the God

[28] See Cox 1983, 23.
[29] Περιῆν δὲ αὐτῷ τοσαύτη περιουσία ἠθῶν κατανοήσεως... (Porphyry, *De Vita Plotini* 11.1, tr. Armstrong).

that is revered in each person."[30] The words of God to Samuel as he looked over the sons of Jesse are echoed: "Do not look at his countenance or his appearance of great stature, because I have deemed him worthless. For God does not see as man does; man looks at the countenance, but God looks at the heart."[31] Plutarch points out that Alexander surrounded himself with philosophers because he loved wisdom and the wise (*De Alexandri Magni Fortuna aut Virtute* 331e).

His philosophical insight into character enables Constantine to avoid some of the pitfalls of imperial rule – dissolute subordinates, flattery, and plots. Eusebius' Constantine, unlike the stereotypical bad emperor, was able to judge the character of his subordinates and insisted that they be virtuous. Eusebius says that he "appointed as φύλακες of the entire household servants and attendants dedicated to God, men whose way of life was orderly, virtuous, and reverent"; his bodyguards, who are described as "armed with the practices of faithful loyalty," learned "pious ways" from the emperor.[32] According to Porphyry, Pythagoras similarly screened potential disciples for their character, using the techniques of physiognomy (Porphyry, *De Vita Pythagorae* 13). There is more at stake in Constantine's case than in Pythagoras', in that unscrupulous imperial servants are liable to create injustice for a fair number of people. In the

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[30] ὁμοτράπεζοι δῆτα συνῆσαν αὐτῷ ἄνδρες εὐτελεῖς μὲν τῇ τοῦ σχήματος ὀφθῆναι περιβολῇ, ἀλλ' οὐ τοιοῦτοι καὶ αὐτῷ νενομισμένοι, ὅτι μὴ τὸν ὁρώμενον τοῖς πολλοῖς ἄνθρωπον τὸν δ' ἐν ἑκάστῳ τιμῶμενον ἐποπτεύειν ἐδόκει θεόν (*VC* 1.42.1).

[31] καὶ εἶπεν κύριος πρὸς Σαμουηλ Μὴ ἐπιβλέψῃς ἐπὶ τὴν ὄψιν αὐτοῦ μηδὲ εἰς τὴν ἕξιν μεγέθους αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἐξουδένωκα αὐτόν· ὅτι οὐχ ὡς ἐμβλέψεται ἄνθρωπος, ὄψεται ὁ θεός, ὅτι ἄνθρωπος ὄψεται εἰς πρόσωπον, ὁ δὲ θεὸς ὄψεται εἰς καρδίαν (*I Samuel (Regnorum I)* 16.7).

[32] διάκονοι δ' αὐτῷ καὶ ὑπηρέται θεῷ καθιερωμένοι βίου τε σεμνότητι καὶ ἀρετῇ πάσῃ κόσμιοι ἄνδρες φύλακες τοῦ παντὸς οἴκου καθίσταντο, δορυφόροι τε πιστοί, σωματοφύλακες, τρόποις εὐνοίας πιστῆς καθωπλισμένοι, βασιλέα διδάσκαλον εὐσεβῶν ἐπεγράφοντο τρόπων... (*VC* 4.18.1).

biographies of the emperors such people typically ingratiate themselves with weak or bad emperors by flattery, but Eusebius portrays Constantine as immune to flattery. In connection with the celebration of Constantine's *tricennalia* a clergyman attempted to flatter Constantine by saying that he not only reigned on earth but would reign with Christ in the world to come; Constantine was annoyed and said he should rather pray that he would be found worthy to serve God as a slave in this world and the next (*VC* 4.48). Here Constantine plays the role of the philosophical ruler, who, having a philosopher's insight into human nature as well as a philosophical disdain for power, is able to perceive flattery and counter it.

Treachery is likewise transparent to Constantine: Galerius plotted against him several times, but God revealed the plot to him each time (*VC* 1.20.2). The philosopher's insight into human nature can take on a supernatural quality in such cases. Plotinus' popularity excited the jealousy of one Olympius, who attempted to cast spells on him, but the spells were deflected and worked on Olympius instead, who gave up the effort and "told his friends that the power of Plotinus' soul was so great that he was able to repel attacks against himself back onto those who were trying to harm him."[33] According to Eusebius, Constantine was granted revelations that enabled him to detect the plots of his family members (*VC* 1.47.2). Such revelations, which came to him frequently, did the work of a secret police: "In fact he was often granted revelations by God: divine visions were miraculously revealed to him that provided him with various

[33] ...ἔλεγε πρὸς τοὺς συνήθεις μεγάλην εἶναι τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς τοῦ Πλωτίνου δύναμιν, ὡς ἀποκρούειν δύνασθαι τὰς εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἐπιφορὰς εἰς τοὺς κακοῦν αὐτὸν ἐπιχειροῦντας (Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 10).

kinds of foreknowledge of future events... Guarded by these he lived out his life in safety...."[34]

Virtue and Access to the Divine

Besides wisdom, the philosopher's main personal characteristic is his virtue. A philosopher had to "walk the walk"; without an extraordinarily virtuous way of life, his message would be compromised. Eusebius articulates the connection in his description of Origen: "For in a quite amazing way his actions displayed to the full the fruits of the most genuine philosophy. His deeds matched his words, as the saying goes, and his words his deeds. That was the chief reason why, aided by the power of God he led men in thousands to share his enthusiasm."[35] The way of life expected of a philosopher was an ascetic one, in which the fewest concessions possible were made to the body.[36] The ascetic practice that Eusebius attributes to Origen included abstaining from wine and eating very little, going barefoot, studying most of the night, and sleeping, when he did so, on the floor (*HE* 6.3.9-11). Origen went to the extreme of castrating himself – a youthful indiscretion, according to Eusebius (*HE* 6.8.1-5). Porphyry tells us that

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[34] καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ θεοφανείας αὐτὸν πολλάκις ἠξίου, παραδοξότατα θείας ὄψεως ἐπιφαινομένης αὐτῷ παντοίας τε παρεχούσης πραγμάτων ἔσεσθαι μελλόντων προγνώσεις... οἷς δὴ πεφραγμένος ἐν ἀσφαλεῖ λοιπὸν τὴν ζωὴν διῆγε... (*VC* 1.47).

[35] ἐπεὶ καὶ τὰ κατὰ πρᾶξιν ἔργα αὐτῷ γνησιωτάτης φιλοσοφίας κατορθώματα εὖ μάλα θαυμαστὰ περιεῖχεν (οἷον γοῦν τὸν λόγον, τοιόνδε, φασίν, τὸν τρόπον καὶ οἷον τὸν τρόπον, τοιόνδε τὸν λόγον ἐπεδείκνυτο), δι' ἃ δὴ μάλιστα, συναιρομένης αὐτῷ δυνάμεως θείας, μυρίους ἐνῆγεν ἐπὶ τὸν αὐτοῦ ζῆλον (*HE* 6.3.6-7, tr. Williamson).

[36] On asceticism in late antiquity see Cox 1983, 25-30. For analysis of the process by which a view of asceticism as dangerous to society was replaced by a positively viewed "heroic ascetics," exemplified by the neo-Platonists and St. Anthony, see Francis 1995, esp. 181-9.

Plotinus stayed away from the baths; he never ate meat and in fact ate very little at all, which Porphyry says enabled him to survive on very little sleep (Porphyry, *De Vita Plotini* 2.4-8, 8.20-24). Such an abstemious lifestyle was the unmistakable trademark of the philosopher. Retreat from the world was a necessary part of it; this could take various forms, from indifference to the admiration of powerful persons to simply staying at home. Eusebius commends Origen for the fact that after spending time, essentially under compulsion, instructing the empress Julia Mamaea he "hurried back to his usual activities."[37] Apollonius of Tyana, in a letter in which he defends a long list of his ascetic practices, congratulates himself that he stays in his house and enjoins his followers to do the same.[38] Disdain for the world and the body were believed to enhance the philosopher's access to the divine by purifying the soul; only by denying the senses could one hope to commune with the realm of the purely intelligible. Numenius compares the process to retreating to a watchtower by the shore and watching the water to catch a quick glimpse of a fishing boat, which immediately disappears again between the waves: "Just so, then, must a man withdraw far from the things of sense, and commune in solitude with the good alone, where there is neither man nor any other living thing...but a certain immense, indescribable, and absolutely divine solitude...."[39]

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[37] ...ἐπὶ τὰς συνήθεις ἔσπευδεν διατριβάς (*HE* 6.21.4). Eusebius says that he himself did the same after delivering the *tricennalia* oration: ἡμεῖς μὲν οἴκαδε ἐπανῆειμεν καὶ τὰς συνήθεις ἀπελαμβάνομεν διατριβάς... (*VC* 4.33.2).

[38] Apollonius Tyanensis, *Epistulae* 8. The authenticity of the letters is in doubt, but if inauthentic they are perhaps even better evidence for *stereotypical* attributes of the philosopher.

[39] οὕτως δεῖ τινα ἀπελθόντα πόρρω ἀπὸ τῶν αἰσθητῶν ὁμιλῆσαι τῷ ἀγαθῳ μόνῳ μόνον, ἔνθα μήτε τις ἄνθρωπος μήτε τι ζῷον ἕτερον...ἀλλά τις ἄφατος καὶ ἀδιήγητος ἀτεχνῶς ἐρημία θεσπέσιος... (Numenius Apamensis, a fragment preserved by Eusebius at *PE* 11.22.1, tr. Gifford).

It is the ascetic, unworldly lifestyle that is at the crux of the paradox of the philosopher-king. Plotinus held up as a model of the philosophical life a senator, Rogatianus, who was converted to philosophy and as a result gave up his slaves and property and completely dropped out of his political career, leaving the lictors standing at his door on the day he was to take up a praetorship (Porphyry, *De Vita Plotini* 7.32-47). Eusebius makes the best case he can for Constantine's asceticism. He commends Constantine's admiration for and generosity to members of the church who had adopted an ascetic lifestyle. He never makes reference to Constantine's own sexual behavior, but he allows him reflected glory from the celibates in the church when he says that "he always honored the choir of God, the hallowed ones who had chosen lifelong virginity, all but worshipping them because he believed that God himself indwelt the souls of people such as these who had dedicated themselves to him."[40]

In addition to profound admiration for Christian ascetics, Eusebius also attributes several ascetic practices to Constantine. One of these is a habit of studying all night. He echoes his earlier description of Origen's lucubrations: in a passage describing Origen's ascetic practices he had said that Origen "applied himself for the great part of the night to the study of the divine writings"; of Constantine he says that

[40] τὸν γοῦν τῶν παναγίων ἀειπαρθένων χορὸν τοῦ θεοῦ μονονουχὶ καὶ σέβων διετέλει, ταῖς των τοιῶνδε ψυχαῖς ἔνοικον αὐτὸν ὑπάρχειν ᾧ καθιέρωσαν ἑαυτὰς θεὸν πειθόμενος (*VC* 4.28).

"to increase his understanding by means of the divinely inspired texts, he would go without sleep during the night..."[41]

Eusebius also attributes to Constantine private prayer rituals, a typical component of the *askesis* of the holy philosopher: "He himself, like a participant in sacred mystery rites, would shut himself in secret rooms in the palace at set times each day and converse with his God with no one else present: on his knees he would beg like a suppliant to receive the things he needed."[42] His prayers were private, were conducted daily, and allowed him access to God. Similarly, daily solitary prayer was part of the regimen of Apollonius, who prayed to the sun every morning (Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 1.16, 2.38). Alcibiades mentions Socrates' morning prayers to the sun at *Symposium* 220d. Iamblichus' solitary prayers were not consistent, according to Eunapius, but he did sometimes worship the divinity by himself, apart from his disciples. The latter learned of his rituals from his slaves, who said that he levitated and turned a golden color during these sessions (Eunapius, *Vitae Sophistarum* 458). The rumor, which provoked a rare laugh from Iamblichus, reflects the common perception that it was during his solitary prayer rituals that the holy philosopher was able to

[41] Origen: καὶ τῆς νυκτὸς δὲ τὸν πλείονα χρόνον ταῖς τῶν θείων γραφῶν ἑαυτὸν ἀνατιθεὶς μελέταις... (*HE* 6.3). Constantine: Καὶ μὴν τὴν αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ διάνοιαν τοῖς ἐνθέοις συναύξων λόγοις, ἐπαγρύπνους μὲν διῆγε τοὺς τῶν νυκτῶν καιρούς... (*VC* 4.29.1).

[42] Αὐτὸς δ' οἷά τις μέτοχος ἱερῶν ὀργίων ἐν ἀπορρήτοις εἴσω τοῖς αὐτοῦ βασιλικοῖς ταμείοις καιροῖς ἑκάστης ἡμέρας τακτοῖς ἑαυτὸν ἐγκλείων, μόνος μόνῳ τῷ αὐτοῦ προσωμίλει θεῷ, ἱκετικαῖς τε δεήσεσι γονυπετῶν κατεδυσώπει ὧν ἐδεῖτο τυχεῖν... (*VC* 4.22.1). Eusebius may well be echoing *Matthew* 6.6: "But you, when you pray, go into your room and close the door and pray to your father who is hidden. And your father, who sees what is hidden, will reward you." σὺ δὲ ὅταν προσεύχῃ, εἴσελθε εἰς τὸ ταμεῖόν σου καὶ κλείσας τὴν θύραν σου πρόσευξαι τῷ πατρί σου τῷ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ· καὶ ὁ πατήρ σου ὁ βλέπων ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ ἀποδώσει σοι.

commune with the divine, or as Eusebius says of Constantine, to "converse with his God."

Eusebius moves directly from Constantine's private daily prayers to his observance of the preliminaries to Easter, when his prayers were conducted in public but took on a more rigorous, ascetic quality: "On the days of the savior's feast he would increase the intensity of his ascetic practice with all the strength of his body and soul as he participated in the divine mysteries; thus he offered himself up in worship that encompassed his whole life while he publicly presided over the festival."[43] Eusebius goes on to describe the observance of the Easter vigil sponsored by Constantine at Constantinople: huge wax candles were lit throughout the city so that night was turned to day, and on Easter itself gifts were given on an imperial scale (*VC* 4.22.2). Eusebius in this passage seems perfectly at ease with the idea of a philosopher-king who uses his position to display the philosophic life for the benefit of his subjects. The narrative moves seamlessly from private rituals in the heart of the palace through the public asceticism of the Easter vigil to the ceremonial granting of benefactions to cities and provinces on Easter morning, and the whole is summed up as "Constantine's worship of his own God."[44]

The most extended description of ascetic practice on Constantine's part is in the account of the wars against Licinius. Eusebius says that during a peaceful interlude

[43] ...ταῖς δὲ τῆς σωτηρίου ἑορτῆς ἡμέραις ἐπιτείνων τὴν ἄσκησιν πάσῃ ῥώμῃ ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος τὰς θείας ἱεροφαντίας ἐτελεῖτο, ὧδε μὲν ἁγνείᾳ βίου ὅλως ἀνακείμενος, ὧδε δὲ τοῖς πᾶσι τῆς ἑορτῆς ἐξάρχων (*VC* 4.22.1).
[44] Οὕτω μὲν οὖν αὐτὸς τῷ ἑαυτοῦ ἱερᾶτο θεῷ (*VC* 4.23.1).

Constantine "dedicated the respite to his God. He pitched his tent a long way from the army, where he followed a chaste and pure regimen and offered to God the prayers due to him, like that ancient prophet of God who pitched his tent outside the camp, as the divine texts affirm."[45] Eusebius claims that this was Constantine's habitual practice while on campaign. He elaborates on the emperor's "chaste regimen" further on in the same section of the narrative, making an explicit connection between self-denial and access to God: "He deprived himself of all ease and of a luxurious way of life and inflicted fasts and bodily suffering on himself; thus he secured God's mercy through his prayers and supplications..."[46]

As Eusebius points out, the paradigm for this remarkable account is Moses' "tent of meeting," which he pitched outside the camp as a place for communing with God during the years of wandering in the wilderness (*Exodus* 33.7-11). Moses' excursions to the tent were an event for the whole community: "And whenever Moses went into the tent outside the camp, all the people stood watching by the door of their tents..."[47] When the people saw the pillar of cloud come down to the tent, they knew that God was talking with Moses, and would bow in reverence. Separation from the community allowed Moses intimate contact with the divine: in the tent God would

[45] ...τῷ αὐτοῦ σωτῆρι τὴν σχολὴν ἀνετίθει, τοῦ μὲν στρατοῦ τὴν σκηνὴν ἐκτὸς καὶ πορρωτάτω πηξάμενος, ἁγνῇ δ' ἐνταυθοῖ χρώμενος καὶ καθαρᾷ διαίτῃ τῷ τε θεῷ τὰς εὐχὰς ἀποδιδούς, κατ' αὐτὸν ἐκεῖνον τὸν παλαιὸν τοῦ θεοῦ προφήτην, ὃν τῆς παρεμβολῆς ἐκτὸς πήξασθαι τὴν σκηνὴν τὰ θεῖα πιστοῦνται λόγια (*VC* 2.12.1).

[46] ...ῥᾳστώνης μὲν ἁπάσης καὶ τρυφηλῆς διαίτης ἀλλοτριούμενος, ἀσιτίαις δὲ καὶ κακώσει τοῦ σώματος πιέζων ἑαυτόν, ταύτῃ τε τὸν θεὸν ἱκετηρίοις λιταῖς ἱλεούμενος... (*VC* 2.14.1).

[47] ἡνίκα δ' ἂν εἰσεπορεύετο Μωυσῆς εἰς τὴν σκηνὴν ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς, εἱστήκει πᾶς ὁ λαὸς σκοπεύοντες ἕκαστος παρὰ τὰς θύρας τῆς σκηνῆς αὐτοῦ... (*Exodus* 33.8).

speak to Moses "face to face, as when someone speaks to his own friend."[48] Constantine likewise while praying in the tent always received a divine revelation, according to Eusebius. He would then rush from the tent "as if moved by divine inspiration" (ὥσπερ θειοτέρᾳ κινηθεὶς ἐμπνεύσει) and send his troops into battle, where they would quickly overwhelm the enemy and proceed to setting up trophies (*VC* 2.12.2). As in the passage just discussed concerning Constantine's prayers, Eusebius again obviates any paradox in the image of a ruler who adopts a philosophical way of life. Like Moses, the paradigm of the philosophical ruler, Eusebius' Constantine engaged in ascetic practices not to separate himself from contact with worldly power, but in order to exercise his power with the benefit of divine charisma.

Rivalry with a False Teacher

The philosopher's devotion to true wisdom will usually bring him into conflict of some sort with a rival. Plato's Socrates had such a relationship with the whole class of sophists. Apollonius' rival was Euphrates of Tyre. There are numerous letters or fragments of letters addressed by Apollonius to Euphrates, in which he berates Euphrates for venality, recommends that he begin to be a philosopher since he is not one yet, calls him ἄθεος, and accuses him of sending an assassin to kill him.[49] Even Philostratus acknowledged that the rivalry was excessively contentious on both sides

[48] καὶ ἐλάλησεν κύριος πρὸς Μωυσῆν ἐνώπιος ἐνωπίῳ, ὡς εἴ τις λαλήσει πρὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ φίλον (*Exodus* 33.11).
[49] *Epistulae Apollonii* 2-7 (venality); 17 (ἄθεος);1 (advice to take up philosophy); 60 (assassin).

(Philostratus, *Vitae Sophistarum* 488). Plotinus' jealous rival, Olympius, who had also been a pupil of Ammonius, attempted to cast spells on him, as we have seen (Porphyry, *De Vita Plotini* 10; see p. 83 *supra*).

This type of intense, personal rivalry is an important part of the literary characterization of the philosopher. In real life, of course, motives on both sides may have been a mix of careerism and heartfelt principles, but in literature the "true" philosopher, *i.e*. the subject of the literary work, is always bolstered by a profound sense of right. Eusebius takes pains to cast Constantine's rivalry with Licinius as a rivalry between a true and a false philosopher. Licinius is made to display the opposite of nearly every philosophical quality attributed to Constantine and to be unable to learn the key truths that shape *VC*. Likewise, the military conflict between the two rulers is interpreted as a philosophical dispute.

The problems began when Licinius "stopped imitating the friend of God and became eager to adopt the destructive policy of the impious ones; he tried to conform to the ways of the very ones whose lives he had with his own eyes seen destroyed rather than pursue good relations with his superior."[50] The desirability of imitation of Constantine as θεοφιλής has been laid out as a key theme of *VC* in the prologue: "At any rate the recording of stories of intimacy with God (θεοφιλῶν διηγημάτων) will provide not useless but in fact very beneficial reading matter for those whose souls have

[50] ...μιμήσεως μὲν τοῦ θεοφιλοῦς ἀπελιμπάνετο, τῆς δὲ των δυσσεβῶν προαιρέσεως ἐζήλου τὴν κακοτροπίαν, καὶ ὧν τοῦ βίου τὴν καταστροφὴν ἐπεῖδεν αὐτοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς, τούτων ἔπεσθαι τῇ γνώμῃ μᾶλλον ἢ ταῖς τοῦ κρείττονος φιλικαῖς δεξιαῖς ἐπειρᾶτο (*VC* 1.49.2).

been made ready for it."[51] Licinius did not have *VC* to guide him, but as Eusebius points out he was actually related to Constantine by marriage and had personally been benefited by him, which makes his irrationality and culpability in ceasing to imitate Constantine all the greater (*VC* 1.49.2, 50.1).

In Eusebius' account, Licinius takes on the opposite of nearly every philosophical trait: his morals become degenerate (*VC* 1.52, 55.3); he becomes cruel and greedy for gain (*VC* 1.55.2); he makes unjust and absurd laws (*VC* 1.51-55); he actively tries to destroy concord (*VC* 1.51.2); he banishes his godly subordinates and comes under the sway of flatterers (*VC* 1.52, 2.2.2). What is most appalling to Eusebius, however, is that Licinius becomes so foolish as to renew the persecution of Christians, though he had before him the evidence that God had punished the persecutors. Eusebius devotes a lengthy passage, forming the climax of Book 1, to this idea (*VC* 1.56-59); he finally indulges in a purple-prose description of Galerius' death by maggot-infested putrefaction and Maximinus Daia's by emaciation, which he had earlier passed over as unnecessary and inappropriate (at *VC* 1.23). Both emperors, he points out, acknowledged the god of the Christians before dying. Licinius, however, did not get the message: "Though he had learned these things from the actual events and not by hearing about them from others, Licinius nonetheless got mixed up in the very same things, as

[51] ...ἡ δέ γε τῶν θεοφιλῶν διηγημάτων ὑπόμνησις οὐκ ἀνόνητον ἀλλὰ καὶ σφόδρα βιωφελῆ τοῖς τὴν ψυχὴν εὖ παρεσκευασμένοις ποριεῖται τὴν ἔντευξιν (*VC* 1.10.4). This sentence is followed by the passage in which Eusebius announces his intention of passing over βασιλικὰ διηγήματα in favor of recording "those things that contribute to the life of intimacy with God," τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεοφιλῆ συντείνοντα βίον (*VC* 1.11.1); see p. 72 *supra*.

though a dark and moonless night had obscured his understanding."[52] Licinius' intellect had simply ceased to function properly. The root of the problem was jealousy of Constantine. He became convinced that the bishops who were "friends of the friend of God, the great emperor" (τοὺς τῷ θεοφιλεῖ καὶ μεγάλῳ βασιλεῖ φίλους, *VC* 1.56.1) were his own enemies, and his anger toward them made him unable to think logically: "For this reason his anger towards us became acute; he abandoned healthy reasoning processes (τοῦ σώφρονος παρατραπεὶς λογισμοῦ), and madness overtook his mind."[53] Eusebius had used the expression σώφρων λογισμός in an episode just prior to this one, to describe the attitude that Constantine wished the clergy to take in order to reach unanimity at the Council of Arles (*VC* 1.45.1). It recurs again to describe Constantine's own thought process as he decided to make war against Licinius (*VC* 2.3.1). The use of σώφρων implies a sound reasoning process, one that is not distorted by the passions: a man overwhelmed by anger as Eusebius says Licinius was would be incapable of σώφρων λογισμός.

The war plays out as a kind of argument between a philosopher-king and a false philosopher-king. Before the armies engage, Licinius leads select friends and members of his bodyguard in worship of several gods whom Eusebius does not identify. He then addresses the group and tells them that the war with Constantine is to be considered a contest between Constantine's god and the traditional gods. The winner will take all: "If

[52] Ταῦτ' ἔργοις μαθὼν ὁ Λικίνιος ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀκοῇ παρ' ἑτέρων πυθόμενος τοις αὐτοῖς ἐπεφύετο, ὥσπερ τινὶ σκοτομήνῃ τὴν διάνοιαν ἐγκαλυπτόμενος (*VC* 1.59.2). This is the closing sentence of Book 1.

[53] διὸ δὴ μάλιστα καθ' ἡμῶν τὸν θυμὸν ὠξύνετο, τοῦ σώφρονος παρατραπεὶς λογισμοῦ διαρρήδην τε μανεὶς τὰς φρένας... (*VC* 1.56.2).

the stranger-god, the one we now laugh at, is shown to be more powerful, nothing should prevent our acknowledging him and paying him honor while bidding a final farewell to these gods, for whom we light these candles in vain."[54] Eusebius' Licinius understands the historical apologetic argument and professes himself willing to accept clear proof of God's intervention on behalf of his worshippers. Constantine for his part also sees the war as a chance to persuade Licinius to accept the truth. After his defeat Constantine spares him, in the hope that he will embrace the "compelling line of reasoning (τὸν κρείττονα λογισμόν)."[55] But it comes as no surprise, given what Eusebius has said about Licinius' inability to reason, that Licinius still fails to draw the correct conclusion: "The memory of his recent harangue about the gods slipped from his mind; he refused to acknowledge Constantine's defender as God and in ridiculous fashion began to seek out more and stranger gods."[56] In the end, defeated a second time and facing what Eusebius calls "a fitting penalty," Licinius, like the other persecutors, acknowledged Constantine's God "as the true and only God."[57] So in the end the κρείττων λογισμός prevailed and Constantine won the argument.

[54] καὶ εἰ μὲν ὁ ξένος καὶ νῦν γελώμενος ἡμῖν κρείττων φανείη, μηδὲν ἐμποδὼν γινέσθω τοῦ καὶ ἡμᾶς αὐτὸν γνωρίζειν τε καὶ τιμᾶν, μακρὰ χαίρειν τούτοις εἰπόντας οἷς μάτην τοὺς κηροὺς ἐξάπτομεν... (*VC* 2.5.4).
[55] ἤλπιζε γάρ ποτε αὐτὸν...λῆξαι μὲν τῆς μανιώδους θρασύτητος, ἐπὶ τὸν κρείττονα δὲ λογισμὸν μεταβαλεῖσθαι τὴν γνώμην (*VC* 2.11.1).
[56] καὶ τῶν αὐτῷ πρὸ μικροῦ περὶ θεῶν ὁμιληθέντων οὐδεμίαν ἐν νῷ κατεβάλετο μνήμην, οὐδὲ τὸν ὑπέρμαχον Κωνσταντίνου γνωρίζειν θεὸν ἤθελε, πλείους δ' αὐτῷ καὶ καινότεροι γελοίως ἀνεζητοῦντο (*VC* 2.15).
[57] ...τὸν Κωνσταντίνου θεὸν ὅστις ἦν παρελάμβανον καὶ τοῦτον ἄρα θεὸν ἀληθῆ καὶ μόνον γνωρίζειν ὡμολόγουν (*VC* 2.18).

A Mission to Teach

Philosophers in the ancient world were judged in part by their ability to make disciples. Love of wisdom was not enough to make a philosopher; he had to have a drive to communicate the truth.[58] Pythagoras, Socrates, Origen, Plotinus, and Iamblichus all are shown as almost constantly surrounded by disciples with whom they tirelessly share their wisdom.[59] Eusebius shows us a Constantine who loved to teach: as Cameron and Hall write in their commentary on *VC*, "Constantine's enthusiasm for instructing his subjects is one of the strongest impressions left of him by the *VC*."[60] The main themes of his teaching as it appears in *VC* were Christian apologetics (often based on the argument from the deaths of the persecutors), proper cult practice, and the need for concord; when he spoke to his court he also addressed the ethical problem of greed. Eusebius portrays Constantine as tireless in his philosophical speaking and letter-writing, both traditional teaching modes for Christians and non-Christians alike.[61] He promises to attach a typical speech of Constantine's to *VC* (*VC* 4.32) and proposes to compile Constantine's instructive letters to the churches (*VC* 3.24.2); the speech survived, but the collection of letters was either lost or never put together. *VC* is

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[58] See Cox 1983, 24.
[59] Pythagoras: Iamblichus, *De Vita pythagorica* 29-30; Origen: *HE* 6.3.8, 6.15; Plotinus: Porphyry, *De Vita Plotini* 7; Iamblichus: Eunapius, *Vitae Sophistarum* 459.
[60] See their note *ad loc*. *VC* 4.55.1.
[61] This is not to say that the Constantinian documents that Eusebius cites were in fact, or would have been perceived as, philosophical letters *per se*, only that in the context of *VC*'s portrayal of Constantine with so many characteristics of the philosopher it is easy to read them as such. As Evans-Grubbs (1995, 50-53) and Corcoran (1996, 296-7) point out, it was not unusual in the later empire for edicts and other official documents from the emperor to have a moralizing tone and a highly rhetorical style, and Constantine's epistles have much in common with numerous tetrarchic documents in that regard, including Diocletian's Edict on Maximum Prices and Maximinus Daia's repeal of the persecution.

nonetheless full of evidence for Constantine's activity as a teacher; I will focus my discussion on a passage in which Eusebius describes Constantine's speeches, two letters addressed by Constantine to the population of the eastern provinces, and the description of Constantine's official actions to suppress traditional cult worship.

Eusebius was aware that Constantine's activity as a teacher was problematized by his power. To communicate his message a philosopher must rely on intellect alone. Attention to his own appearance or to the niceties of rhetoric makes a philosopher suspect; it goes without saying that he will never rely on the threat of force to back his message up. Proximity to power is liable to corrupt a philosopher; hence the sometimes gratuitous rudeness toward rulers that they adopt. A philosopher must have total παρρησία, total freedom from fear of the consequences of his speech. Philosophical παρρησία was considered to be inversely related to entanglement with the things of the world, so that lack of power actually enhanced a philosopher's credibility – at least in the literary stereotype. This is why Socrates presents his notion that philosophers must be rulers or rulers philosophers as a paradox. As we look at what Eusebius has to say about Constantine's teaching, we will pay special attention to how he deals with the problem of power.

Eusebius devotes a long passage in Book 4 to an account of Constantine's speech-making at court (*VC* 4.29-32). He includes a description of a typical speech and promises to append such a speech to *VC* as an example. The speech that we know as *Oratio ad Sanctorum Coetum* may be the speech that Eusebius was thinking of; in any

case, it fits his description of a typical speech fairly well. Taking all the evidence together – the lengthy passage that we are about to examine, the description later in Book 4 of a speech "made to his regular audience" (see p.115 *infra*), and Eusebius' stated intention to append a speech of Constantine's to *VC* – it seems likely that Eusebius is describing a real phenomenon when he tells us about Constantine's speech-making.

> In hopes of enhancing his mental powers by means of the divine texts he would both spend the hours of the night sleepless and give frequent addresses in public without the help of his speechwriters. He thought it was incumbent on him to use instructive discourse to rule his subjects and to establish every aspect of his rule on a rational basis. Therefore whenever he would announce that he was going to lecture, immense throngs would come in eager haste to learn from the emperor's philosophizing.[62]

In his account of the speeches here Eusebius describes a combination of rational, mystical, and ethical elements. As he introduces the topic Eusebius focuses on the rational. Constantine studied and wrote late into the night, working hard to prepare a convincing, reasonable lecture. His goal was instruction based on reason: he thought he should rule his subjects λόγῳ παιδευτικῷ, and he wanted to establish his rule as λόγικη. And it was the emperor's philosophy, not his theology, that Eusebius says the multitudes rushed to hear; he goes on to say that theology would sometimes come up during these speeches (εἰ δέ πη λέγοντι θεολογίας αὐτῷ παρήκοι καιρός... *VC* 4.29.2), making it clear by the contrast that he intends for φιλοσοφοῦντος to refer to

[62] Καὶ μὴν τὴν αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ διάνοιαν τοῖς ἐνθέοις συναύξων λόγοις, ἐπαγρύπνους μὲν διῆγε τοὺς τῶν νυκτῶν καιρούς, σχολῇ δὲ λογογραφῶν συνεχεῖς ἐποιεῖτο τὰς παρόδους, προσήκειν ἡγούμενος ἑαυτῷ λόγῳ παιδευτικῷ τῶν ἀρχομένων κρατεῖν λογικήν τε τὴν σύμπασαν καταστήσασθαι βασιλείαν. διὸ δὴ συνεκάλει μὲν αὐτός, μυρία δ' ἔσπευδεν ἐπ' ἀκρόασιν πλήθη φιλοσφοῦντος ἀκουσόμενα βασιλέως (*VC* 4.29.1-2).

intellectual discourse. To judge from his description of a typical speech here, however, the speeches were primarily dedicated to Christian apologetics and ethics, topics for which Eusebius with this terminology is claiming an impeccable intellectual pedigree.

According to Eusebius when theology did come up in the speeches Constantine would change his manner of speaking. Eusebius creates a vivid image of Constantine as theurgist: "He would stand very straight and screw up his face and lower his voice, so that he seemed to be initiating the audience with utmost reverence into the divinely inspired teaching..."[63] Such religious solemnity became a stock-in-trade of philosophers in the late antiquity; one is reminded of Maximus of Ephesus, by whom the emperor Julian was so impressed (Eunapius, *Vitae Sophistarum* 473-475) and of the fifth-century tondo portrait from Aphrodisias of a philosopher gazing upward with an intense expression.[64] The audience knew how to respond: "...when the audience would call out in response with shouts of commendation, he would direct them with a movement of his head to look above to heaven and to adore and honor with reverent praises none but the ruler over all."[65] Apollonius of Tyana was said to have used a similar gesture, for a somewhat different purpose. When he appeared before Domitian to defend himself Apollonius ignored the emperor; ordered by his accuser to "look toward the god of all human beings" (ὁρᾶν...ἐς τὸν ἁπάντων ἀνθρώπων θεόν), he looked toward the ceiling, "making it clear that he looked toward Zeus, and believing that the one who

[63] ...πάντως που ὄρθιος ἑστὼς συνεστραμμένῳ προσώπῳ κατεσταλμένῃ τε φωνῇ, μυεῖν ἔδοξεν ἂν τοὺς παρόντας σὺν εὐλαβείᾳ τῇ πάσῃ τὴν ἔνθεον διδασκαλίαν (*VC* 4.29.2).
[64] See Zanker 1995, 319 and figure 168.
[65] ...εἶτ' ἐπιφωνούντων βοαῖς εὐφήμοις τῶν ἀκροωμένων, ἄνω βλέπειν εἰς οὐρανὸν διένευε καὶ μόνον ὑπερθαυμάζειν καὶ τιμᾶν σεβασμίοις ἐπαίνοις τὸν ἐπὶ πάντων βασιλέα (*VC* 4.29.2).

was flattered in this impious way was worse than the flatterer."[66] So Constantine, the philosophical emperor, deflects from himself the praise that should go to God, whereas Domitian, the persecutor of philosophers, is inclined to appropriate it for himself.

Even more than the rational and the mystical, it is the ethical aspect of Constantine's speeches that Eusebius emphasizes in this passage. The emperor seems to have hoped that he could reduce corruption in his government by lecturing the members of his court about divine judgment:[67]

> He explained in the clearest, most distinct terms that he would be accountable to God for the things that they had undertaken, in that the God over all had given him authority over things on earth and he in imitation of the Almighty had entrusted to them the various dioceses of the empire. Everyone, furthermore, would have to give an account of their actions at the appointed time to the great king.[68]

Constantine, according to Eusebius, uses the Hellenistic concept of the monarch as imitator of the divine to bolster his argument.[69] As God had given him authority, he in imitation of God had given it to them; in the resulting hierarchy all of them were

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[66] ...ἀνέσχεν ὁ Ἀπολλώνιος τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐς τὸν ὄροφον, ἐνδεικνύμενος μὲν τὸ ἐς τὸν Δία ὁρᾶν, τὸν δὲ ἀσεβῶς κολακευθέντα κακίω του κολακεύσαντος ἡγούμενος (Philostratus, *De Vita Apollonii* 8.4).

[67] See Evans-Grubbs 1995, 39 and 101, on a law of 325 (*Codex Theodosianus* 9.1.4) in which Constantine requests "all inhabitants of the provinces" to inform him of misdoings by members of his government. As Evans-Grubbs points out, there is no need to attribute either this law or Constantine's harangues against corruption to a particularly Christian motivation on Constantine's part, as Eusebius does. Moralizing language had by the late empire become a standard feature of the emperors' rhetoric (Evans-Grubbs 1995, 102). Here as elsewhere Eusebius is likely to be generalizing Constantine's Christianity to aspects of his reign that it did not necessarily affect.

[68] οἷς δὴ λαμπραῖς φωναῖς μαρτυρόμενος διεστέλλετο θεῷ λόγον δώσειν τῶν ἐγχειρουμένων αὐτοῖς· αὐτῷ μὲν γὰρ τὸν ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸν τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς τὴν βασιλείαν παρασχεῖν, αὐτὸν δὲ μιμήσει τοῦ κρείττονος τῆς ἀρχῆς τὰς κατὰ μέρος αὐτοῖς ἐπιτρέψαι διοικήσεις, πάντας γε μὴν τῷ μεγάλῳ βασιλεῖ κατὰ καιρὸν τὰς εὐθύνας τῶν πραττομένων ὑφέξειν (*VC* 4.29.4).

[69] See Dvornik 1966, 241-277, esp. 249, 253, 258, 271. Of course, it is possible that Eusebius falsely attributes this argument to Constantine. The concept of the ruler's μίμησις of the divine is central in Eusebius' *LC* and he alludes to it briefly in the prologue to *VC* (1.5.1). See Dvornik 1966, 614-622, on Eusebius' use of kingship theory.

answerable to God. Most philosophers would not be in a position to make this particular argument: Constantine's ethical teaching was untypical of the philosopher in that he had the authority to compel his hearers to take his advice. But Eusebius takes great pains to indicate that Constantine refrained from using compulsion. In fact, Constantine's attempt to "use instructive discourse to rule his subjects" (*VC* 4.29.1) is characterized as a failure. Constantine seemed at first to be successful: "It was as though he were striking and scourging them with his words, so that he made some of the notables who were gathered around bow down, conscience-stricken...."[70] But in the end nothing changed: "They were slow to learn and deaf to noble ideas – with their voices and their shouts of commendation they applauded his words, but in their actions they ignored what he said on account of their greed."[71]

Eusebius gives the impression, using repeated verbs in the imperfect, that Constantine showed great patience in repeating his lessons over and over for his "slow-to-learn" pupils. Willingness to repeat himself certainly characterizes Plato's Socrates; Porphyry commends Plotinus for his great patience: "For three days I asked him how the soul is connected to the body, and he kept explaining."[72] When his patience wore thin, Constantine resorted to other typically philosophical methods to get his message across to his corrupt courtiers.

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[70] ...παίων δ' ὥσπερ καὶ διαμαστίζων τῷ λόγῳ τῶν περιεστώτων γνωρίμων τινὰς κάτω νεύειν πλητομένους τὴν συνείδησιν ἐποίει... (*VC* 4.29.4).
[71] οἱ δ' ἄρ' ἦσαν δυσμαθεῖς καὶ πρὸς τὰ καλὰ κεκωφωμένοι, γλώττῃ μὲν καὶ βοαῖς εὐφήμοις ἐπικροτοῦντες τὰ λεγόμενα, ἔργοις δὲ κατολιγωροῦντες αὐτῶν δι' ἀπληστίαν... (*VC* 4.29.5).
[72] Τριῶν γοῦν ἡμερῶν ἐμοῦ Πορφυρίου ἐρωτήσαντος, πῶς ἡ ψυχὴ σύνεστι τῷ σώματι, παρέτεινεν ἀποδεικνύς... (Porphyry, *De Vita Plotini* 13).

> Finally one day he collared one of his courtiers and said to him, "What limit shall we put on greed, boy?" Then, using a spear that he happened to have in his hand, he marked on the ground a length that was the height of a man and said, "If you owned all the wealth in the world and every atom of the earth, you would take with you nothing more than the little homestead inside these boundaries – if you got that much."[73]

This passage is an example of a *chreia*, an anecdote culminating in a wise man's pithy, pointed saying.[74] As Eusebius tells the story it involves a bit of play-acting on Constantine's part that evokes the numerous stories of philosophers drawing in the dust. The best known is that of Socrates in *Meno*, but there are others: Menedemus of Eretria drew an obscene picture on the ground to shame away an admirer; Archimedes was tracing geometric figures on the ground when he was killed in the sack of Syracuse; Jesus was drawing or writing in the dust while he was being addressed by the accusers of the woman taken in adultery.[75] Eusebius admits that Constantine's lesson did no good: "But even though he said and did these things, the blessed one didn't hinder any of them."[76] The object lesson might be considered to contain a veiled threat, as Constantine had the power to reduce the corrupt courtier's land holdings to the size he indicated. But Eusebius makes it clear that no such threat is intended or perceived: "Fear of death, which might have deterred the wicked ones from their depravity, was

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[73] ...ἤδη ποτὲ τῶν ἀμφ' αὐτόν τινος ἐπιλαβόμενον φάναι· "καὶ μέχρι τίνος, ὦ οὗτος, τὴν ἀπληστίαν ἐκτείνομεν;" εἶτ' ἐπὶ γῆς μέτρον ἀνδρὸς ἡλικίας ἐγχαράξας τῷ δόρατι, ὃ μετὰ χεῖρας ἔχων ἐτύγχανε, "τὸν σύμπαντα τοῦ βίου πλοῦτον", ἔφη, "καὶ τὸ πᾶν τῆς γῆς στοιχεῖον εἰ κτήσαιο, πλέον οὐδὲν τουτουὶ τοῦ περιγραφέντος γηδίου ἀποίσεις, εἰ δὴ κἂν αὐτοῦ τύχοις" (*VC* 4.30.1).

[74] See Malherbe 1986, 109, 111-113. Malherbe cites Diogenes Laertius' four different versions of an anecdote about washing salad greens as examples of *chreiai*.

[75] Menedemus: Diogenes Laertius 2.127. Archimedes: Cicero *De Finibus* 5.19, Valerius Maximus 8.7, Livy 25.31 (Plutarch at *De Vita Marcelli* 19.4 has the same story but does not specify that Archimedes was drawing in the dust). Jesus: *John* 8.1-11.

[76] ἀλλ' οὐδένα ταῦτα λέγων τε καὶ πράττων ἔπαυεν ὁ μακάριος... (*VC* 4.30.2).

non-existent, both because the emperor was entirely devoted to love of his fellow man and because those in charge of the provinces never under any circumstances went after wrong-doers. This led to serious criticism of the imperial administration."[77]

Eusebius in this episode depicts Constantine as the frustrated philosopher whose message is ultimately not heeded by the wealthy and powerful, those who need it most. This archetypal scene is crucial for the characterization of Constantine as a philosopher. The episode is highly ironic: the emperor, by refusing to act as a tyrant, finds himself in the position of a humble philosopher, powerless against greed. It would bring an ordinary philosopher into danger to continue to preach at powerful courtiers about their corruption, but since Constantine is the all-powerful emperor (a point that has been made perfectly clear by book 4), he is not in any danger. With all threat of violence absent, the scene deteriorates into a confrontation between flattery on one side and feckless frustration on the other, and lends a rare touch of something like humor to Eusebius' portrayal of Constantine.

Eusebius might have used the word παρρησία, the usual term for a philosopher's boldness in speaking, in this passage, but did not; he does use it in several other passages, always in reference to Constantine's proclamation of a Christian message. In the prologue Eusebius says that when embassies came from foreign lands Constantine "in imperial addresses would proclaim his own God with complete

[77] Ἐπεὶ δ' οὐκ ἦν θανάτου φόβος ἀπείργων τοὺς κακοὺς τῆς μοχθηρίας, βασιλέως μὲν ὅλου πρὸς τὸ φιλάνθρωπον ἐκδεδομένου, τῶν δὲ καθ' ἕκαστον ἔθνος ἀρχόντων μηδαμῆ μηδαμῶς μηδενὸς τοῖς πλημμελοῦσιν ἐπεξιόντος, τοῦτο δὴ μομφὴν οὐ τὴν τυχοῦσαν τῇ καθόλου διοικήσει παρεῖχεν... (*VC* 4.31).

boldness (σὺν παρρησίᾳ τῇ πάσῃ) even to people of this sort."[78] Eusebius says that by means of a statue and inscription that Constantine placed in Rome after his victory over Maxentius he "made the son of God known to the Romans themselves with all boldness (σὺν παρρησίᾳ πάσῃ)."[79] At the end of the long synkrisis of Constantine and the persecutors at the beginning of Book Three, Eusebius says that Constantine "was constantly presenting himself to everyone with complete boldness (σὺν παρρησίᾳ τῇ πάσῃ) as the ambassador of the Christ of God, in no way concealing the name that brings salvation..."[80] And in the final paragraph of *VC* he says that Constantine proclaimed the Christian message πεπαρρησιασμένως (*VC* 4.75). Παρρησία may mean either freedom of speech in the sense of freedom from political restraints on speech or boldness in speaking, speech without regard for the consequences. It is in the latter sense that Eusebius uses it. It is commonly used in this sense of philosophers; it occurs fairly frequently in the pages of Diogenes Laertius. Theodorus, a philosopher who was banished from Athens, was sent packing by Lysimachus for his παρρησία (Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum* 2.102). Simon, the author of the original Socratic dialogues, declined the patronage of Pericles, saying he would not sell his παρρησία (Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum* 2.123). Menedemus' παρρησία got him and a friend into danger at a dinner at the court of Nicocreon of Cyprus

[78] ὁ δὲ καὶ μέχρι τῶν τῇδε βασιλικοῖς προσφωνήμασι τὸν ἑαυτοῦ θεὸν ἀνεκήρυττε σὺν παρρησίᾳ τῇ πάσῃ (*VC* 1.8.4).
[79] ...σὺν παρρησίᾳ πάσῃ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ Ῥωμαίοις αὐτοῖς γνώριμον ἐποίει (*VC* 1.41.1). In fact the imagery of the statue and the wording of the inscription were quite ambiguous.
[80] τοιγάρτοι τὸν Χριστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ σὺν παρρησίᾳ τῇ πάσῃ πρεσβεύων εἰς πάντας διετέλει, μηδὲν ἐγκαλυπτόμενος τὴν σωτήριον ἐπηγορίαν... (*VC* 3.2.2).

(Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum* 2.129-130). Aristotle's kinsman Callisthenes of Olynthus spoke with excessive freedom, παρρησιαστικώτερον, to Alexander the Great, against Aristotle's advice; he ended up imprisoned, infested with vermin, and finally thrown to the lions (Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum* 5.5). Παρρησία and παρρησιάζομαι are used frequently in *Acts* to describe the apostles' boldness in teaching; in the last verse of the book, Paul is said to have continued his teaching "with all boldness," μετὰ πάσης παρρησίας, during the two years that he lived under house arrest in Rome (*Acts* 28.31). With its connotations of boldness in the face of oppressive power, παρρησία is not a particularly appropriate term to use of an emperor. Like the anecdote of Constantine rebuking the greedy courtier, Eusebius' use of παρρησία to describe the emperor's profession of Christianity is part of his characterization as a person who is committed to speech rather than force.

Constantine makes this claim for himself in his Letter to the Provincials of the East, which he sent out to dispel rumors that traditional worship had been outlawed. This letter is the clearest example of an imperial epistle that reads as a philosophical letter among the documents in *VC*.[81] It opens with a statement of the argument from design, the idea that the natural world provides evidence of the truth about the nature of the deity:

> Victor Constantine Maximus Augustus to the provincials of the East. Everything that is embraced by the inviolable laws of nature provides to the sense-perception of all people sufficient evidence of the providence and spiritual insight that characterize the divine plan. For those whose thought moves toward

[81] On philosophical letters see Malherbe 1986, 79-85.

> that goal along the straight road of knowledge there can be no doubt that undistorted perception, by means of both a healthy reasoning faculty and the sense of sight, will lead them up to the knowledge of God in a spontaneous motion of true virtue.[82]

This concept was well known to Christians, as it appears in the opening paragraphs of Paul's letter to the Romans; it was also common in Hellenic thought.[83] As Paul does in Romans, Constantine uses the argument from design to justify God's punishment of polytheists (*VC* 2.49-54). In the second part of the letter Constantine addresses God in prayer; his theme is concord – unanimity of belief if that is possible, but failing that, "the enjoyment of peace and quiet" for everyone (εἰρήνης τε καὶ ἡσυχίας ἀπόλαυσιν, 2.56.1) and no enforced conversions. He is perfectly clear on this point. Modern commentators have been troubled by Constantine's abusive language about polytheism, sensing that it undermines or even negates the message of tolerance.[84] But it is more likely that Constantine, having disavowed the option to use compulsion, is simply using every verbal tactic he can to get his point across, including invective. He encourages his Christian subjects to take a similar approach and to persuade, if possible, but not to coerce: "Whatever anyone has seen and understood he must use to help his

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[82] Νικητὴς Κωνσταντῖνος Μέγιστος Σεβαστὸς ἐπαρχιώταις ἀνατολικοῖς. Πάντα μὲν ὅσα τοῖς κυριωτάτοις τῆς φύσεως περιέχεται νόμοις, τῆς κατὰ τὴν θείαν διάταξιν προνοίας τε καὶ θεωρίας ἱκανὴν αἴσθησιν τοῖς πᾶσι παρέχει, οὐδὲ ἔστι τις ἀμφιβολία οἷς κατ' εὐθεῖαν γνώσεως ὁδὸν ἡ διάνοια ἐπ' ἐκεῖνον ἄγεται τὸν σκοπόν, ὡς ἡ τοῦ ὑγιοῦς λογισμοῦ καὶ τῆς ὄψεως αὐτῆς ἡ ἀκριβὴς κατάληψις μιᾷ ῥοπῇ τῆς ἀληθοῦς ἀρετῆς ἐπι τὴν γνῶσιν ἀναφέρει τοῦ θεοῦ (*VC* 2.48.1).

[83] See *e.g.* Cicero *Disputationes Tusculanae* 1.28, *De Natura Deorum* 2.6.16; Ps-Aristotle *De Mundo* 6, especially 399b: ...πάσῃ θνητῇ φύσει γενόμενος ἀθεώρητος ἀπ' αὐτῶν τῶν ἔργων θεωρεῖται. (Cited by Leenhardt 1981, 37.)

[84] See Barnes 1984. Digeser (2000, 126), however, finds in this letter "a paradigmatic statement of concord," *i.e.* of a policy of forbearance aiming at eventual unity. See Digeser 2000, 167-71, for discussion of the scholarship on Constantine's religious policy from 324 on.

neighbor, if this is possible; if not, let the neighbor be sent on his way. For it is one thing to enter the contest for immortality willingly, another thing entirely to force people into it with penalties."[85] Constantine rejects compulsion; as a necessary corollary to that policy, he is committed to teaching with the goal of persuading his non-Christian subjects to convert. This is what he means in the closing of the letter:

> I have said and explained these things at greater length than was necessary to accomplish the purpose of my clemency because I did not wish to conceal my belief in the truth, especially since I hear that some are saying that the customs of the temples and the lordship of darkness have been abolished. This is in fact exactly what I would have advised for the benefit of all people, if it were not the case that there is firmly planted in the souls of some the wicked error that gives rise to violent rebellion that in turn is harmful to the common safety.[86]

Constantine acknowledges that he has written an unusual imperial document – unusual in that it attempts to persuade rather than to compel. (For "my clemency" read "my imperial authority."[87]) He says that he must teach, in the first place, because he feels compelled to communicate the truth. But in the current situation he feels a special urgency precisely because he wants to make it clear that teaching, not compulsion, is to be his *modus operandi* for combating traditional religion, despite what people are saying. The final sentence approaches the same idea from a different direction; to understand it we must recall that the desirability of concord is a main theme of the

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[85] ὅπερ θάτερος εἶδέν τε καὶ ἐνενόησεν, τούτῳ τὸν πλησίον εἰ μὲν γενέσθαι δυνατὸν ὠφελείτω, εἰ δ' ἀδύνατον παραπεμπέσθω. ἄλλο γάρ ἐστι τὸν ὑπὲρ ἀθανασίας ἆθλον ἑκουσίως ἐπαναιρεῖσθαι, ἄλλο τὸ μετὰ τιμωρίας ἐπαναγκάζειν (*VC* 2.60.1).

[86] ταῦτα εἶπον, ταῦτα δειξῆλθον μακρότερον ἢ ὁ τῆς ἐμῆς ἐπιεικείας ἀπαιτεῖ σκοπός, ἐπειδὴ τὴν τῆς ἀληθείας ἀποκρύψασθαι πίστιν οὐκ ἐβουλόμην, μάλισθ' ὅτι τινὲς ὡς ἀκούω φασὶ τῶν ναῶν περιῃρῆσθαι τὰ ἔθη καὶ τοῦ σκότους τὴν ἐξουσίαν· ὅπερ συνεβούλευσα ἄν πᾶσιν ἀθρώποις, εἰ μὴ τῆς μοχθηρᾶς πλάνης ἡ βίαιος ἐπανάστασις ἐπὶ βλάβῃ τῆς κοινῆς σωτηρίας ἀμέτρως ταῖς ἐνίων ψυχαῖς ἐμπεπήγει (*VC* 2.60.2).

[87] According to North (1966, 300), ἐπιεικεία is a standard translation of clementia. It is the word that appears on the Monumentum Ancyranum to translate "clementia" at *Res Gestae* 34 (ed. Diehl, p.45).

letter. Constantine says that he would ban traditional worship if it weren't for deeply committed polytheists – not because he worries about offending them (clearly), but because the result would be civil unrest. If pagan beliefs were lightly held, closing the temples would be enough to Christianize the empire; since they are not, all Christians, even the emperor, must become teachers.

Eusebius refers to this letter of Constantine's as "teaching that refuted the idolatrous error of those who had ruled before him," in which he tried to persuade his subjects to acknowledge the God of all and "publicly choose Christ as savior."[88] Here he echoes the language he has used to describe Constantine's conversion: Constantine looked for a god to "publicly choose" (ἐπιγράφεσθαι) as his ally and decided that events of recent history were adequate proof, ἔλεγχον, of the truth of Christianity and the falsehood of traditional belief.[89] What Constantine learned from God in the conversion episode he is now teaching – as a philosopher should do. His use of a letter, which apart from Eusebius' account would be interpreted as a feature of governance, in the context of *VC* seems to be a tool for teaching in the tradition of Plutarch and other writers of philosophical letters, including the writers of the New Testament epistles and many of the church fathers. There is also a sizable corpus of letters attributed to

[88] Ἐπιτείνας δ' ἔτι μᾶλλον βασιλεὺς τὴν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ὁσίαν διδασκαλίαν ἀπελεγκτικὴν τῆς εἰδωλολάτρου πλάνης τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ κεκρατηκότων τοῖς κατὰ πᾶν ἔθνος ἐπαρχιώταις κατέπεμπε, λογιώτερον τοὺς ἀρχομένους προτρέπων τὸν ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸν γνωρίζειν αὐτόν τε τὸν Χριστὸν αὐτοῦ διαρρήδην ἐπιγράφεσθαι σωτῆρα. "By way of serving God even more fully, the emperor dispatched to the provincials of every nationality a teaching that refuted the idolatrous error of those who had ruled before him. In it he reasonably exhorted his subjects to recognize the God over all and to explicitly and publicly choose his Christ as their savior" (*VC* 2.47.1). (For ἐπιγράφεσθαι as "publicly choose" see LSJ *s.v.* ἐπιγράφω, III.5.)

[89] *VC* 1.27.2-3; see pp.54-5 *supra*.

Apollonius of Tyana. Other letters in *VC* that can be described at least in part as philosophical letters include those addressed to Alexander and Arius (*VC* 2.64-72), to the churches of Palestine (*VC* 3.17-20, a tendentious account of the Council of Nicaea), and to the provincials of Palestine (*VC* 2.24-42). In the last of these Constantine prefaces his decrees concerning the restoration of rights and property to victims of the persecution with five paragraphs of apologetic argument.

Apologetics and ethics were not the only themes of Constantine's teaching; he also taught about correct religious practice. The idea that it was the philosopher's business to reform traditional cult practice is common to several philosopher biographies. Pythagoras was associated with teachings about proper types of sacrifice (Iamblichus, *De Vita Pythagorica* 11; Porphyry, *De Vita Pythagorae* 36; Philostratus, *De Vita Apollonii* 1.1). Cult practice was of course a major theme of the teaching attributed to Moses (Philo, *De Vita Mosis* 2.15-34). According to Philostratus, Apollonius of Tyana, wherever he happened to be, after his private ritual of worship spent the rest of the morning "philosophizing" with the priests of the city about the gods and correcting them if they had departed from the traditional practices; if the local cult was not one of the traditional Greek ones, he would learn as much as the priests could tell him about it and suggest improvements in their worship, if any occurred to him (Philostratus, *De Vita Apollonii* 1.16). Philostratus describes Apollonius in the latter part of his career receiving deputations from cities to ask for advice on various matters including their cult sites; he would respond to some requests with letters and some with

a promise to visit the city (Philostratus, *De Vita Apollonii* 4.1). At Pergamum he was impressed with the temple of Asclepius and gave the god's supplicants advice on how to obtain helpful dreams (Philostratus, *De Vita Apollonii* 4.11). A treatise on sacrifice is attributed to Apollonius, which Philostratus says he found in several temples, and which Eusebius cites (Philostratus, *De Vita Apollonii* 3.41, 4.19; *PE* 4.13). Philostratus says that Apollonius' work led to a sort of religious revival: "Because of his conversations about cult practice the gods were worshipped more, and people came together for worship hoping to receive more good things from the gods."[90]

There are references to Constantine's promotion of Christian cult on nearly every page of *VC*. One example is a fairly long passage describing Constantine's promotion of Sunday observance in his own household and in the army (*VC* 4.17-20). Three times in this passage Eusebius describes Constantine's activity in promoting Sunday prayers as teaching: the praetorians "enlisted the emperor as their instructor in the devout way of life" (βασιλέα διδάσκαλον εὐσεβῶν ἐπεγράφοντο τρόπων, *VC* 4.18.1); Constantine "taught the whole army to honor zealously" the day of the Sun and of salvation (...τὰ στρατιωτικὰ πάντα διὰ σπουδῆς τιμᾶν δισδάσκων, *VC* 4.18.3); and the monotheistic prayer recited on Sundays by non-Christian soldiers was taught to them by Constantine himself (καὶ τῆς εὐχῆς δὲ τοῖς στρατιωτικοῖς ἅπασι διδάσκαλος ἦν αὐτός, *VC* 4.19). If it is true, as Eusebius says, that Constantine actually led prayer services in the palace and delivered harangues to the soldiers in

[90] Διαλεγομένου δὲ αὐτοῦ περὶ τὰ ἱερὰ οἱ θεοὶ ἐθεραπεύοντο μᾶλλον, καὶ ξυνήεσαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἐς ταῦτα, ὡς τὰ ἀγαθὰ πλείω παρὰ τῶν θεῶν ἕξοντες (Philostratus, *De Vita Apollonii* 4.41).

conjunction with their prayers, these activities are aptly described as teaching.[91] But much of Constantine's activity in promoting Christianity would better be described as patronage than as teaching – building of churches, commissioning of copies of the scriptures, and so on. These methods of promoting proper cult worship were not available to an ordinary philosopher. Eusebius and Constantine, however, both have a tendency to describe these activities as teaching, a metaphor that can verge into rather ominous doublespeak, particularly where the promotion of Christianity involves the disestablishment of traditional cults, as in the following paraphrase of an official letter outlawing ritual prostitution at the temple of Aphrodite at Heliopolis.

> But now a new and virtuous law was circulated from the emperor forbidding anyone to dare to practice the ancient customs; he added written teachings to [the adherents of the cult], asserting that he had been appointed by God to do this very thing on his behalf, namely to instruct all people in the laws of virtuous behavior. And so he did not think it beneath him to address even them in a document written by himself, and he exhorted them to pursue eagerly the knowledge of the almighty.[92]

Again Eusebius' Constantine seems to approach this official document as an opportunity for a philosophical letter about the superiority of his own religion. Eusebius characterizes part of the text of the law as "written teachings," ἐγγάφους διδασκαλίας; he attributes to Constantine the claim that God's purpose for him was to

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[91] According to the fifth-century church historian Theodoret of Cyrrhus, Jovian's soldiers reassured him that they were devout Christians, "for the older ones among us had the benefit of Constantine's teaching and the younger ones partook of instruction from Constantius." οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἐν ἡμῖν γεραίτεροι καὶ τῆς Κωνσταντίνου διδασκαλίας ἀπήλαυσαν, οἱ δὲ μετ' ἐκείνους τῶν Κωνσταντίου μετέλαχον παιδευμάτων... (Theodoret, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 4.1.4).

[92] νυνὶ δὲ νόμος ἐφοίτα νέος τε καὶ σώφρων παρὰ βασιλέως μηδὲν τῶν πάλαι συνήθων τολμᾶν διαγορεύων, καὶ τούτοις δ' ἐγγράφους πάλιν παρέθετο διδασκαλίας, ὡς ἂν ἐπ' αὐτῷ τούτῳ πρὸς τοῦ θεοῦ προηγμένος ἐφ' ᾧ πάντας ἀνθρώπους νόμοις σωφροσύνης παιδεύειν. διὸ οὐκ ἀπηξίου καὶ τούτοις δι' οἰκείου προσομιλεῖν γράμματος, προὔτρεπέ τε σπεύδειν ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ κρείττονος γνῶσιν (*VC* 3.58.2).

teach virtuous behavior, πάντας ἀνθρώπους νόμοις σωφροσύνης παιδεύειν. But in this case, unlike the letter to the provincials disavowing the use of compulsion against traditional religion, the main purpose of the document is to forbid a religious practice. Thus both Eusebius and Constantine by their language are claiming for an act of coercion the humble status of religious instruction. Eusebius goes on to say that Constantine also established the first church at Heliopolis, complete with church building, personnel, and a fund for caring for the poor. In doing this, he says, Constantine "followed up his words with actions akin to them," τὰ ἔργα ἐπῆγε τοῖς λόγοις ἀδελφά (*VC* 3.58.3). Again he downplays the compulsory nature of the decree and highlights its persuasive side by characterizing it as λόγοι and contrasting it with the ἔργα of church-building.

The description of the letter to Heliopolis is part of a longer section on measures taken by Constantine to discourage traditional worship and to suppress particular cults. In some of the cases Eusebius actually plays up the official, compulsory nature of the action taken, while at the same time characterizing it as teaching – having it both ways, in other words. When Eusebius recounts the destruction by soldiers at the emperor's command of a temple to Aphrodite at Aphaca in Lebanon, he first characterizes the temple as "a certain school of wickedness," σχολή τις κακοεργίας, and then says that the worshippers "learned self-control from the Emperor's threat," σωφρονεῖν δ' ἐμάνθανον ἀπειλῇ βασιλέως (*VC* 3.55.5). The emphasis on σωφροσύνη is characteristic of the philosopher; the language was probably suggested to Eusebius by

Constantine's expression in the decree concerning the temple at Heliopolis, νόμοις σωφροσύνης παιδεύειν.[93] The account of the destruction of the temple of Asclepius in Cilicia, also by imperial soldiers, is similar: Eusebius belittles the worshippers of the god as "superstitious would-be Greek philosophers," τῶν δοκησισόφων Ἑλλήνων οἱ δεισιδαίμονες, and the temple as "the celebrated marvel of the noble philosophers," τὸ τῶν γενναίων φιλοσόφων βοώμενον θαῦμα (*VC* 3.55.5, 56.2). When it was torn down by soldiers, the god's adherents "learned their own empty foolishness by experience," τῆς σφῶν ματαιότητος ἔργῳ τὴν πεῖραν ἐμάνθανον (*VC* 3.55.5). The god was defenseless, as in the myth of his death at the hands of Zeus; but Constantine's actions "were not a matter of mythology," οὐκ ἐν μύθοις ἦν (*VC* 3.56.3).

Eusebius also presents Constantine's campaign to confiscate temple treasures as a lesson in the foolishness of idol worship (*VC* 3.54). Officials were sent around who required temple priests to bring out the cult statues; crowds had been assembled for the occasion to jeer at the statues, a humiliating and intimidating experience for the worshippers of the gods. The statues were then stripped of any valuable adornments or confiscated outright. In this way, according to Eusebius, the officials "brought the ancient error to light," πολυχρονίου πλάνης ἐποιοῦντο φωράν (*VC* 3.54.6); he also describes the process as a refutation, ἔλεγχον (*VC* 3.54.5).[94] The confiscated statues

[93] See North 1966, 150-242, on σωφροσύνη in philosophy from Plato to Proclus, and 300-11, on σωφροσύνη as an imperial virtue.

[94] *Cf.* 3.54.1, the introduction to the section on the desecration of cult statues: "Continually honoring his savior God in these ways, he completely refuted the superstitious error of the peoples by a variety of methods." καὶ τὸν μὲν αὐτοῦ σωτῆρα θεὸν ὧδέ πη διετέλει γεραίρων, τὴν δέ γε τῶν ἐθνῶν δεισιδαίμονα πλάνην παντοίοις ἐξήλεγχε τρόποις.

were taken to Constantinople for display in public places; when they saw their sacred objects exposed to ridicule "those who had suffered from the sickness of error finally learned what it was to be in their right mind," οἱ τὴν πλάνην νενοσηκότες ὀψέ ποτε φρονεῖν ἔγνωσαν (*VC* 3.54.3).

Eusebius sums up the emperor's actions against traditional cult worship as a largely successful exercise in what might be called practical apologetics (*VC* 3.57). In the destruction of temples and particularly in the desecration of statues, the people had, according to Eusebius, visible, actual proof (he uses the term ἔλεγχον again) of the folly of their beliefs (*VC* 3.57.1). As a result (and Eusebius presents it as an inevitable result) many turned to Christianity while the rest deplored the folly that had been passed down to them by their ancestors.

Thus in attributing to Constantine a mission to teach, Eusebius employs two strategies to circumvent the problem of attempting to portray a powerful man as a philosopher. First, whenever possible he depicts Constantine as choosing persuasion instead of compulsion, and heightens that image of the powerless philosopher by referring to the emperor's παρρησία. Second, when describing Constantine's coercive acts in the field of religion, he presents them as a form of teaching, whose purpose is not just to stamp out a particular practice but to create a change of belief in the minds of those affected by them. In both of these strategies he follows Constantine's own lead, as can be seen from the documents.

A Philosophical Death

Eusebius depicts Constantine's final days as a period of purification, during which his soul was being prepared to leave his body for a purely spiritual realm (*VC* 52-64). He became seriously ill as he prepared to invade Persia; he postponed the campaign and decided to undergo baptism. The emperor's baptism is described as not only a purification but a revelation: Constantine said afterwards, "Now I know that I am in the truest sense blessed, now I am clearly worthy of eternal life, now I have received a share of the divine light."[95] From this point on he was eager to meet his death (*VC* 4.63.2). He fell ill after Easter and died on Pentecost; in saying that he was "taken up to his God," πρὸς τὸν αὐτοῦ θεὸν ανελαμβάνετο, Eusebius makes an implicit comparison to the ascension of Christ (*VC* 4.64.2; *cf. Mark* 16.19, ἀνελήμφθη εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν).

Eusebius makes it clear that Constantine's preparation for this glorious death had been the work of a lifetime. Eusebius describes Constantine as having reached a state of perfection physically, spiritually, and intellectually. He was still athletically skilled; his body was still physically fit and was "more youthful than any young man's," παντός τε νέου νεανικώτερον (*VC* 4.53); St. Anthony at a much greater age was also said to be preternaturally youthful as a result of his virtuous way of life.[96] Spiritually Constantine "was approaching the height of perfection for human beings," καὶ τὰ τῆς

[95] "νῦν ἀληθεῖ λόγῳ μακάριον οἶδ' ἐμαυτόν, νῦν τῆς ἀθανάτου ζωῆς πεφάνθαι ἄξιον, νῦν τοῦ θείου μετειληφέναι φωτός" (*VC* 4.63.1).
[96] *VC* 4.53; Athanasius, *De Vita Antonii* 93.

ψυχῆς δ' ὡσαύτως εἰς ἄκρον τῆς ἐν ἀνθρώποις τελειώσεως αὐτῷ προήει (*VC* 4.54.1). And "his mind's verbal powers had become so advanced," οὕτω τὴν ψυχὴν λογικῇ συνέσει προῆκτο, that he was still composing edifying speeches up to the very end (*VC* 4.55.1).

Eusebius is especially impressed that Constantine gave a sort of funeral speech for himself toward the end of his life.

> Speaking earnestly and at length, he held forth in this speech about the immortality of the soul, about those who have lived out this present life in a reverent way, and about the blessings that God himself holds stored in his presence for his friends. He also devoted long explanatory passages to a clear account of what sort of destiny awaits the ranks of the enemy, for in his speech he related the downfall of the godless.[97]

Eusebius says that Constantine made this speech to "his regular audience," ἐπὶ τοῦ συνήθους ἀκροατηρίου (*VC* 4.55.2). Presumably it was given before he fell ill; it is likely that it seemed more premonitory in hindsight than it did when it was delivered. In it Constantine revisited the perennial topic of the deaths of the persecutors ("the downfall of the godless"); his discussion of God's rewards for his worshippers may very well have touched on the afterlife, but by emphasizing that topic Eusebius creates a parallel with *Phaedo*, in which Plato depicts Socrates as passing his final hours talking about the immortality of the soul and the various sorts of existence that it may meet with after death.

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[97] ...μακρὸν δὲ κατατείνας ἐν τούτῳ περὶ ψυχῆς ἀθανασίας διεξῆει περί τε τῶν εὐσεβῶς τὴν παροῦσαν διηνυκότων ζωὴν τῶν τε τοῖς θεοφιλέσι παρ' αὐτῷ θεῷ τεταμιευμένων ἀγαθῶν, μακραῖς δ' ἀποδείξεσι καὶ τὸ τῶν ἐναντίων τάγμα ὁποίου τέλους τεύξεται φανερὸν ἐποίει, τῶν ἀθέων τὴν καταστροφὴν παραδιδοὺς τῇ γραφῇ (*VC* 4.55.2).

Several ideas from *Phaedo* are echoed in Eusebius' account of Constantine's last days. One is the idea of a journey, more or less difficult, to the afterlife. Eusebius says that "by instructing his followers in this way before his death, he seemed to be preparing for himself an easy journey to the higher realm."[98] Socrates concludes his speculations about the soul by saying that a person can be confident about the fate of his soul if he has cultivated knowledge and virtue and "in that condition awaits the journey to Hades," οὕτω περιμένει τὴν εἰς Ἅιδου πορείαν (Plato, *Phaedo* 115a). Constantine is made to allude to the idea of a journey himself when he rebukes his army officers for weeping in his presence, saying that they were to "hasten rather than delay the journey to his God," σπεύδειν μηδ' ἀναβάλλεσθαι τὴν πρὸς τὸν αὐτοῦ θεὸν πορείαν (*VC* 4.63.2). Socrates likewise had rebuked his friends for crying uncontrollably as he took the poison (Plato, *Phaedo* 117c-d). In both texts the idea of the separation of the soul from the body at death appears; this is of course an important theme of *Phaedo*, as summarized for instance by Socrates toward the end of the dialogue: "So when death comes upon a person, it seems that the mortal part of him dies, but the immortal part evades death and goes away safe and intact."[99] He also asks his friends to explain to poor Crito that he will be able to bury his body but not Socrates himself: "Give him a pledge that when I die I will not linger here but go away."[100]

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[98] τοιαῦτα πρὸ τῆς τελευτῆς τοῖς γνωρίμοις ὁμιλήσας, αὐτὸς αὐτῷ τὴν ἐπὶ τὰ κρείττω πορείαν λεῖαν καὶ ὁμαλὴν ἐφίκει παρασκευάζειν (*VC* 4.55.3).
[99] Ἐπιόντος ἄρα θανάτου ἐπὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸ μὲν θνητόν, ὡς ἔοικεν, αὐτοῦ ἀποθνήσκει, τὸ δ' ἀθάνατον σῶν καὶ ἀδιάφθορον οἴχεται ἀπιόν, ὑπεκχωρῆσαν τῷ θανάτῳ (Plato, *Phaedo* 106e).
[100] ὑμεῖς δὲ ἦ μὴν μὴ παραμενεῖν ἐγγυήσασθε, ἐπειδὰν ἀποθάνω, ἀλλὰ οἰχήσεσθαι ἀπιόντα... (Plato, *Phaedo* 115d).

Eusebius' account of Constantine's death emphasizes the same point: "At about the hour of the noonday sun, he was taken up to his God. He entrusted to mortals the part of him that is akin to them, but he himself, the part of his soul that is both rational and intimate with God, became joined to his God. That was the end of the life of Constantine."[101] Constantine's purified soul is united to God after death; Socrates hints at a similar conception of the fate of the soul when he speculates that those who "have been sufficiently purified through philosophy live thereafter in a completely incorporeal state and come to even more beautiful dwelling places, which are not easy to describe...."[102]

Eusebius has brought his reader around to the very place where he began *VC* – to the realm of the divine, where Constantine's soul resides, "stripped of all mortal and earthly attire," θνητοῦ μὲν καὶ γεώδους παντὸς ἀφειμένην περιβλήματος (*VC* 1.2.2). But in the intervening text he has done his job as artist by creating a "*logos*-portrait," διὰ λόγων εἰκόνα, as he promised in the prologue, which connects the reader with the θεοφιλής part of Constantine (*VC* 1.10). The soul of Constantine in heaven is useless as "a pattern of godliness for all humankind," ἅπασιν ἀνθρώποις παράδειγμα θεοσεβοῦς, without the sense of his character supplied by Eusebius' text (*VC* 1.3.4). By means of anecdotes, documents, and descriptions of official acts Eusebius has attempted

[101] ἀμφὶ μεσημβρινὰς ἡλίου ὥρας πρὸς τὸν αὐτοῦ θεὸν ἀνελαμβάνετο, θνητοῖς μὲν τὸ συγγενὲς παραδοὺς ἔχειν, αὐτὸς δ' ὅσον ἦν αὐτοῦ τῆς ψυχῆς νοερόν τε καὶ φιλόθεον τῷ αὐτοῦ θεῷ συναπτόμενος. τοῦτο τέλος τῆς Κωνσταντίνου ζωῆς (*VC* 4.64.2).
[102] τούτων δὲ αὐτῶν οἱ φιλοσοφίᾳ ἱκανῶς καθηράμενοι ἄνευ τε σωμάτων ζῶσι τὸ παράπαν εἰς τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον, καὶ εἰς οἰκήσεις ἔτι τούτων καλλίους ἀφικνοῦνται, ἃς οὔτε ῥᾴδιον δηλῶσαι οὔτε ὁ χρόνος ἱκανὸς ἐν τῷ παρόντι (Plato, *Phaedo* 114c).

to convey to the reader an image of something transcendent, the soul of one he describes as θεοφιλής, intimate with God.

CHAPTER THREE

Images and Interpretations

Eusebius' promise to "imitate the mortal art of painting" and "dedicate a *logos*-portrait to the memory of the friend of God" (*VC* 1.10) is one of many references, literal and metaphorical, to the visual arts in *VC*. While it is typical of Greek encomiastic literature to concern itself with its relationship to visual monuments,[1] *VC* reveals a particularly strong fascination with the ways in which man-made images, symbols, and architectural structures create and convey meaning.[2] References to and descriptions and interpretations of pictures, coin types, statues, and buildings abound in *VC*, and twice when describing elaborate scenes from real life Eusebius compares the sight to a picture (*VC* 3.15.2, 4.7.2). Eusebius' use of the language of the visual arts and his descriptions and interpretations of images and monuments show his awareness of the remarkable transformation in artistic expressions of ideology that was taking place around him. The processes by which meaning is assigned, evaluated, denied, and re-assigned to man-made objects were in constant play in the Constantinian empire, and Eusebius reflects those processes in his literary treatment of numerous products of human artistry.

Assessment of Eusebius' treatment of art in *VC* has been hampered by certain received opinions about attitudes to art among the clergy in the early church generally,

[1] See Steiner 2001, ch. 5, for an excellent treatment of this topic, focusing on Pindar.
[2] See Cameron 1991, 61-4.

opinions that have been seriously questioned by recent scholarship. A re-evaluation of this underlying issue as it pertains to Eusebius will enable us to recognize that the symbolic and moralizing tendencies that he shares with non-Christian authors in his broader intellectual milieu are developed in a particularly rich way with respect to the visual arts. After a discussion of these issues I will examine several passages from *VC* that involve both literal and metaphorical references to products of the visual arts.

Art and the Fathers of the Church

In considering Eusebius' statements about architecture and non-pictorial art along with those about pictorial art I will be departing from the usual approach. Discussions of the attitudes of the church fathers to art usually center on their view of pictorial art as distinct from non-pictorial art, a categorization that began with the Byzantine iconoclastic controversies, was reinforced in the Protestant reformation, and has prevailed in modern scholarship.[3] In the early twentieth century, Hugo Koch, applying to the field of Christian art the theory of Adolf von Harnack that the spiritual purity of the early church was gradually contaminated by Hellenization, laid the groundwork for the model of the pre-medieval history of Christian art and attitudes to art that predominated throughout the twentieth century.[4] According to this model, the

[3] See Finney 1994, ch. 1, for a survey of the history of this line of thought.
[4] Koch 1917, esp. 81-90; see Finney 1994, 7-9. Influential applications of the model include Baynes 1955 and Kitzinger 1954. Theodor Klauser applied Koch's theory, which was based on literary evidence, to archaeological evidence; his extensive work in this area is summarized in Klauser 1965.

church fathers before Constantine were uniformly iconophobic, or opposed to any use by Christians of pictorial images, which they believed would violate the second commandment (*Exodus* 20.4-6, forbidding the making of "graven images") and lead to idolatry. Before 200, when the first distinctly Christian art begins to appear in the archaeological record, the clergy and laity are supposed to have been in agreement as to the dangers of art, but from that time on the laity is assumed to have shown more independence and the clergy to have found themselves fighting a losing battle against the advance of idolatry. From the Constantinian period on, according to this view, much of the clergy abandoned the fight against Christian figural art, though some clung to the older, more theologically pure position even in the face of imperial iconophilia.[5]

A first challenge to this model was issued by Murray (1977), who undermined one of its key supports by arguing that the church fathers attached much less importance to the second commandment than had been assumed. Since then the work of Paul Finney has seriously called the old model into question. Finney (1994) makes a convincing case that the purported opposition of the early church fathers to Christian art has been wrongly deduced from their statements about pagan cult objects in apologetic literature, due in part to a misunderstanding of the methods of apologetic.[6] Statements about art in apologetic literature dealt not with Christian but with pagan art and actually

[5] See Baynes 1955, 125-6, for the idea that when Constantine sponsored the building of churches complete with figural art the clergy "did not scrutinize the gift too closely – their scruples were silenced." From that point on, according to Baynes, they were unable to stop the rising tide of enthusiasm for Christian art. It is not actually known whether Constantine's churches contained figural art; Grigg (1977) suggests that they did not and that Constantine deliberately took an iconophobic stance in order to appease the bishops.

[6] See Finney 1994, ch. 2-3, esp. pp. 30-31.

borrowed from non-Christian philosophical critiques of popular religion.[7] The intent was to establish common ground with the non-Christian intellectual in order to garner his respect for, if not his conversion to Christianity. To this end the apologists evoked a variety of philosophical commonplaces in their attack on pagan cult – the superiority of the spiritual realm over the material, nostalgia for a supposedly pure and pre-iconic primitive religion, and abhorrence of superstition, including magical practices and beliefs.[8] "The apologists wanted simultaneously to flatter and impress their addressees... [T]hey also needed an enemy, and the ignorant man-in-the-streets, mired in the muck of iconic superstition and degradation, served their purposes quite nicely."[9] This was an apologetic strategy aimed at educated non-Christians. Derogatory statements about cult objects in the writings of the apologists may also have been meant to cement the resolve on the part of Christian readers to reject all aspects of popular religion.[10] But they had nothing to do with pastoral policy on the issue of Christian art, apart from serving as an oblique reminder of how such art was not to be used.

According to Finney, the failure of Christians to produce their own distinctive art before 200 is due not to iconophobia but to the Christian community's lack of the

[7] See *e.g.* Plutarch, *De Superstitione* 167d-e: "Then again such persons give credence to workers in metal, stone, or wax, who make their images of gods in the likeness of human beings, and they have such images fashioned, and dress them up, and worship them." εἶτα χαλκοτύποις μὲν πείθονται καὶ λιθοξόοις καὶ κηροπλάσταις ἀνθρωπόμορφα τῶν θεῶν τὰ εἴδη ποιοῦσι, καὶ τοιαῦτα πλάττουσι καὶ κατασκευάζουσι καὶ προσκυνοῦσι.
[8] See Finney 1994, ch. 3. A few representative passages from Eusebius are cited at note 14 *infra*. Faraone (1992, esp. ch. 1) discusses the magical properties popularly attributed to statues and other cult objects.
[9] Finney 1994, 292.
[10] Finney neglects the possibility that apologetic was directed in part toward a Christian audience.

stability and resources needed to produce their own material culture.[11] During this period they selectively adopted images from non-Christian art for their own use, and a passage in which Clement assures his readers that it is acceptable to do so, within certain limits, provides strong evidence for clerical approval of the judicious use of figural art by Christians (Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 3.12.1). The development of Christian art in the third century is part and parcel of the desire for public acceptance and visibility that characterized the sect, including and especially the leaders, from the beginning.[12]

Eusebius' statements about pictorial art across his long career have caused some problems for the proponents of the old model. *VC*, written at the end of his career, contains clearly positive statements about pictorial art, yet a letter that he wrote at some point after 324 to Constantia, the sister of the emperor, in which he all but berates her for requesting from him a picture of Christ, seems to reflect a fierce iconophobia.[13] And

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[11] Finney 1994, ch. 5.

[12] See esp. Finney 1994, 99-104 and 290-93.

[13] Eusebius himself makes no mention of the letter, and no complete text of it survives. It was saved from complete oblivion by the eighth-century iconoclasts, who cited it in defense of their position at the Council of Hieria in 754, which condemned the production and veneration of images. The fragments were preserved in the acts of the Second Council of Nicaea of 787, which reversed the Council of Hieria, in *Contra Eusebium et Epiphanidem* by the eighth-century iconophile patriarch Nicephorus, and in writings of the fourteenth-century scholar Nicephorus Gregoras. The first attempt at reconstructing the letter from the fragments was made by Boivin in 1702; subsequent editions have followed Boivin's reconstruction. The letter's authenticity has generally been somewhat unquestioningly accepted. It was disputed by Murray (1977) but has been convincingly re-asserted on stylistic grounds by Gero (1981), who demonstrated that a forger would have had to be extraordinarily skillful to create such typically Eusebian prose. (The only weak element in Gero's argument is his claim that Constantia would have been an unlikely addressee for a forger to choose. In fact she would be a very clever choice as proponent of a position that an orthodox Byzantine theologian wanted to discredit, in that she was even more closely associated with Arianism than was Eusebius and for the simple reason that she was female and thus particularly prone to charges of irrationality and inferior spirituality. (See Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 2.27.1-5 and 2.34.2, for the tradition of Constantia' pernicious pro-Arian influence.) Gero

PE, written while the eastern empire was ruled by Licinius, contains the standard apologetic arguments about the use of statues in pagan cult worship, the sort of statements that have been assumed to indicate hostility to all pictorial art.[14] The most extreme response to the apparent inconsistencies is that of Klauser: convinced that the letter to Constantia indicated a thorough-going iconophobia, he was unwilling to suppose that Eusebius executed a complete about-face and concluded that the positive references to statues and pictures in *VC* were interpolated in the late fourth century.[15] But without the presupposition that Eusebius was categorically opposed to the use of images the apparent paradox disappears. The surviving text of the letter to Constantia is so narrowly focused that it can only be used to determine Eusebius' attitude in the special case of images of Christ, and it doesn't tell the whole story on that issue: there are other references to images of Christ in his writings that are more positive (*DE* 5.9, *HE* 7.18). Opposition to the possession, and perhaps the devotional use, by Christians of pictures of Christ reflects a pastoral concern with the narrow issue of idolatry and does

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might have cited in support of the letter's authenticity the tradition, seemingly trustworthy, of relationships between empresses and scholars, *e.g*. Julia Domna and Philostratus (Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 1.3), Julia Mamaea and Origen (*HE* 6.21.4), Salonina, wife of Gallienus, and Plotinus (Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 12).)

[14] *E.g*. *PE* 3.10.19: "How could the God over all and the Mind that is the creator of the universe be that Zeus that is in bronze or dead ivory?" πῶς οὖν ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸς καὶ νοῦς ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργικὸς εἴη ἂν αὐτὸς ὁ ἐν τῷ χαλκῷ ἢ τῷ νεκρῷ ἐλέφαντι Ζεύς; See *PE* 1.9.13-18 for the idea that early religion was aniconic and the use of cult statues is a sign of decadence. *PE* 5.36 is a quotation of a satirical critique of cult objects by the second-century Cynic Oenomaus of Gadara.

[15] Klauser 1965, 5.

not conflict with the positive view of other pictorial and non-pictorial art that Eusebius expresses elsewhere; neither does his objection to pagan statuary.[16]

But even though Eusebius was not departing from an original iconophobic stance of his own or rebelling against entrenched iconophobia among Christian clergy, it is nonetheless the case that his enthusiasm for and fascination with both art and architecture in writings from 315 on represents something new in his thought and in the thought of the church fathers. [17] This was in part an accident of chronology – changes in his world beckoned him in this direction. Christian material culture experienced a sudden unprecedented growth spurt in the latter years of Eusebius' life, and he responded by eagerly studying the new phenomena for deeper meanings, becoming the first Christian author to produce allegorical interpretations of products of the visual arts,

[16] Koch and Baynes, who consider Eusebius to have been representative of clerical iconophobia (Koch describes Eusebius as the foremost "outspoken opponent of images of the Constantinian period"), also acknowledge a distinction between Eusebius' approach to portraits of Christ and to other art (see Koch 1917, 41, 45-46, and Baynes 1955, 122). But they fail to account for Eusebius' positive enthusiasm for images in *VC*, which is at odds with the uncompromising hostility to art they attribute to the clergy and which led Klauser to assume the passages must be inauthentic. Baynes hints at the logical conclusion to his position – that the clerical "sell-out" began with Eusebius – but does not make it explicit. Bevan (1940, 111-12) takes a similar approach but acknowledges the possibility that Eusebius' "adulation of Constantine got the better of him" in *VC*. Barasch (1992, 143-55) argues that Eusebius introduced into Christian thought a distinction between symbolic images and iconic images, the former representing something entirely outside themselves, the latter claiming a much closer connection, or even identity, with their subject. Constantia's requested image of Christ would have been in the latter category.

[17] Robert Wilken (1992b, 81) makes this point very effectively with respect to the related issue of Eusebius' development of the new idea of Jerusalem as a Christian holy place: "More than any other early Christian thinker Eusebius was able to adapt his thinking to the new things that happened in his day. With the discovery of the tomb of Christ in Jerusalem, he began almost at once to integrate the new facts about Jerusalem into his religious and theological outlook. Like Ezekiel centuries earlier Eusebius was the first to discern the profound shift in devotion that was taking place in his day and to lay the foundations for a Christian idea of the holy land." See pp.150-65 *infra* on Eusebius' treatment in *VC* of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

applying to these objects the same techniques that he and his predecessors had been accustomed to use primarily on texts.

The main distinction that concerned Eusebius as he considered the products of human artistry was not between text and images, or between pictorial and non-pictorial art, but between things that convey true meaning and things that do not. As we have already seen (pp.16-17 *supra*), pagan statuary for Eusebius is a completely misguided attempt to communicate the truth about the divine, because its makers do not even grasp the idea that the divine has no part in the material world; the same is true for him of much pagan literature. Even in the letter to Constantia, where he might have relied solely on the second commandment or on church tradition (he cites both), the bulk of his argument is based on the inadequacy of an image of the incarnate Christ for truly portraying the transcendent nature of the second person of the Trinity.[18] The maker of an image of Christ might attempt to portray his divinity but would fail, according to Eusebius, since the body of the incarnate Christ is the aspect of him that is the furthest from his divinity, and the non-incarnate Logos cannot be depicted at all. In other passages, however, it is clear that Eusebius assumes that art of various kinds can convey spiritual truth, even truth about Christ. In *DE*, for instance, he describes a picture of the visit of three divine beings to Abraham at Mamre in Palestine (*DE* 5.9). Christian tradition identified the visitors as two angels accompanying the second person of the

[18] On the second commandment and church tradition, see *Ep. Const.* col. 1548c. On the inadequacy of an image for portraying Christ's divinity, see *e.g. Ep. Const.* col. 1546c, referring to the Transfiguration: "Who could depict in dead and lifeless colors and painting the brilliant, flashing rays of such august glory?" Τίς οὖν τῆς τοσαύτης ἀξίας τε καὶ δόξης τὰς ἀποστιλβούσας καὶ ἀπαστραπτούσας μαρμαρυγὰς οἷός τε ἂν εἴη καταχαράξαι νεκροῖς καὶ ἀψύχοις χρώμασι καὶ σκιογραφίαις...;

trinity, the Logos of God in a sort of proto-incarnation. Eusebius says that this belief is established by scripture and further supported by the fact that a cult was observed at Mamre, which as he implies here and states clearly at *VC* 3.51-53 was not a Christian cult. In this context he mentions a picture that conveys the fact that one of the visitors was the Logos by giving him more prominence than his companions. "[The prominent figure in the picture] would be the Lord himself who has been revealed to us, our Savior, to whom even those who do not know him pay reverence, giving credence to the holy oracles."[19] Eusebius' implication is that the picture was produced not by a Christian but by someone who had a mere inkling of the identity of the Logos. Eusebius makes the point that even a seemingly unenlightened person may be able to communicate a bit of truth, taking essentially the same approach to this pictorial work of art and to the cult at Mamre generally that he takes to the Platonic texts in *PE* 11 and 12.[20] When dealing with objects that he believes to have been designed by Christians, Eusebius' search for hidden truths becomes much more ambitious.

[19] Εἴη δ' ἂν ὁ δεδηλωμένος ἡμῖν κύριος αὐτὸς, ὁ ἡμέτερος σωτήρ, ὃν καὶ οἱ ἀγνῶτες σέβουσι, τὰ θεῖα λόγια πιστούμενοι (*DE* 5.9).
[20] See pp.27-8 *supra*.

Mimesis and Mystic Viewing

Eusebius, like other ancient writers from Plato on who deal with art, begins from the assumption that art is mimetic.[21] Mimesis in antiquity was a flexible concept, allowing for idealist as well as naturalist theories of art. The idea that art may represent not just material phenomena but a world beyond the realm of the material is already present in Plato: at *Republic* 5.472d, for instance, Socrates compares the attempt to describe in words the archetype of the good city to a painting of an ideally beautiful but non-existent person.[22] This positive view of mimesis is balanced by the well-known passage in *Republic* 10 in which Socrates is made to fault the mimetic arts, understood as mimetic of the material world, for being at the farthest possible remove from the ideal world. While occasional references to the negative view of mimesis can be found in later Platonist writers,[23] for the most part they take a positive view of artistic mimesis, associating it with the metaphysical mimetic relationships that they posited between the various levels of reality.[24] For these thinkers – and Eusebius is in their number – the mimetic nature of art can serve as a metaphor for the way in which the lower orders reflect and assimilate to the higher orders. Plotinus goes beyond the metaphoric use of artistic mimesis and espouses the idealist view that the artist bases his portrayals on the higher orders, not on the visible world; unfortunately he does not develop this concept with regard to any specific work of art apart from a brief mention of Phidias' statue of

[21] See Halliwell 2002, esp. p. 22, for "the establishment of a unitary categorization of mimetic art, or the mimetic arts, as a general cultural datum" by the fourth century B.C.E.
[22] See Halliwell 2002, 129-31.
[23] *E.g.* Plotinus, *Enneades* 4.3.10.17-20, and Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 6.16.147.3.
[24] See Halliwell 2002, 314-16, for this concept in Plotinus.

Zeus at Olympia.[25] It was Eusebius who was the first to apply the neo-Platonist idea of mimesis as the structuring principle of the cosmos in an extended interpretation of a work of human artistry. His speech for the dedication of the cathedral at Tyre (*HE* 10.4) is a fascinating document that envisions a great web of mimetic relationships converging in the cathedral building; I will discuss it below after looking at a passage from Philo that uses the idea of artistic mimesis metaphorically.

A corollary of the neo-Platonist tendency to view artistic mimesis as either emblematic of or an extension of the mimetic relationships that link the highest order of reality with the lowest is that art becomes intimately connected with ethics. Neo-Platonist mimesis is not just a matter of the lower orders passively taking their form from the higher, but, particularly in the case of the human soul, of striving to assimilate to the ideal.[26] In the following passage from his *De Vita Mosis* Philo uses the metaphor of artistic mimesis to describe a kind of chain reaction of ethical transformation.

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[25] "But if anyone despises the arts on the grounds that it is by copying nature that they create, we must first say that natural things also copy other things. Then he must realize that the arts do not simply copy what is visible but rather go back to the forming principles that are the source of nature. He must furthermore understand that the arts create many things on their own and supplement where something is defective, since they possess beauty. For Phidias did not refer to anything that can be perceived by the senses to create his Zeus but rather conceived what Zeus would be like if he chose to appear before our eyes." εἰ δέ τις τὰς τέχνας ἀτιμάζει, ὅτι μιμούμεναι τὴν φύσιν ποιοῦσι, πρῶτον μὲν φατέον καὶ τὰς φύσεις μιμεῖσθαι ἄλλα. ἔπειτα δεῖ εἰδέναι, ὡς οὐχ ἁπλῶς τὸ ὁρώμενον μιμοῦνται, ἀλλ' ἀνατρέχουσιν ἐπὶ τοὺς λόγους, ἐξ ὧν ἡ φύσις. εἶτα καὶ ὅτι πολλὰ παρ' αὐτῶν ποιοῦσι καὶ προστιθέασι δέ, ὅτῳ τι ἐλλείπε, ὡς ἔχουσαι τὸ κάλλος· ἐπεὶ καὶ ὁ Φειδίας τὸν Δία πρὸς οὐδὲν αἰσθητὸν ποιήσας, ἀλλὰ λαβὼν οἷος ἂν γένοιτο, εἰ ἡμῖν ὁ Ζεὺς δι' ὀμμάτων ἐθέλοι φανῆναι (Plotinus, *Enneades* 5.8.1.32-40). Plotinus here clearly means to refute the anti-mimesis argument of *Republic* 10. At the beginning of this passage he posits a statue "not of a particular man, but of one that art has created using all sorts of beauty" (*Enneades* 5.8.1.11-12), alluding to *Republic* 5.472d (see p.128 *supra*) and thus indirectly citing Plato as an authority for his refutation of Plato.

[26] See *e.g.* Plotinus, *Enneades* 1.2.7: a person who has advanced in virtue will leave behind the life of the good man with its civic virtues and "choose another life, that of the gods. For it is to these, not to good men, that one should be assimilated. Assimilation to good men is like the similarity of two pictures of the same subject to each other. But assimilation to the other is like becoming similar to an archetype." ἀλλὰ

> [Moses] is said to have entered the darkness where God was, that is, the formless and invisible and incorporeal archetypal essence of the things that exist, and to have perceived things that cannot be seen by mortal nature. And he exhibited himself and his life like a skillfully painted picture, an utterly beautiful and god-like work that he set up as an archetype for those who wish to copy it. Blessed are those who have received the impression of that image in their souls or who have longed to receive it. For ideally the mind should bear the perfect form of virtue, but if not, it should have an unequivocal desire to possess that form.[27]

Put simply, Philo's point is that Moses, as a result of his mystical encounter with God, achieved an ethical perfection that made him a model to emulate for those who have not been granted such an experience. Philo describes a two-stage process involving two slightly different types of mimesis: having seen God, Moses becomes θεοειδής, by a process that we might call "mystical mimesis";[28] those who model their lives on Moses' without benefit of a personal theophany may be said to engage in "ethical mimesis." (In the following paragraph Philo will describe a lower order of ethical mimesis, namely

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τοῦτον μὲν καταλιπών, ἄλλον δὲ ἑλόμενος τὸν τῶν θεῶν· πρὸς γὰρ τούτους, οὐ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους ἀγαθοὺς ἡ ὁμοίωσις. Ὁμοίωσις δὲ ἡ μὲν πρὸς τούτους, ὡς εἰκὼν εἰκόνι ὡμοίωται ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἑκατέρα. Ἡ δὲ πρὸς ἄλλον ὡς πρὸς παράδειγμα. See also *Enneades* 5.4.1.33: everything when it reaches maturity produces something, "in respect of everlastingness and goodness imitating the first principle to the extent of its ability," τὴν ἀρχὴν κατὰ δύναμιν ἀπομιμούμενα εἰς ἀιδιότητά τε καὶ ἀγαθότητα. As Halliwell (2002, 315) says, "If, in Plotinus's scheme of things, being or reality 'flows' down the cosmos from top to bottom, mimetic affinities are one way of talking about the process by which all being endeavors to revert, upward, to its source."

[27] εἷς τε τὸν γνόφον, ἔνθα ἦν ὁ θεός, εἰσελθεῖν λέγεται, τουτέστιν εἰς τὴν ἀειδῆ καὶ ἀόρατον καὶ ἀσώματον τῶν ὄντων παραδειγματικὴν οὐσίαν, τὰ ἀθέατα φύσει θνητῇ κατανοῶν· καθάπερ τε γραφὴν εὖ δεδημιουργημένην ἑαυτὸν καὶ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ βίον εἰς μέσον προαγαγὼν πάγκαλον καὶ θεοειδὲς ἔργον ἔστησε παράδειγμα τοῖς ἐθέλουσι μιμεῖσθαι. εὐδαίμονες δ' ὅσοι τὸν τύπον ταῖς ἑαυτῶν ψυχαῖς ἐναπεμάξαντο ἢ ἐσπούδασαν ἐναπομάξασθαι· φερέτω γὰρ ἡ διάνοια μάλιστα μὲν τὸ εἶδος τέλειον ἀρετῆς, εἰ δὲ μή, τὸν γοῦν ὑπὲρ τοῦ κτήσασθαι τὸ εἶδος ἀνενδοίαστον πόθον (Philo, *De Vita Mosis* 1.158-159).

[28] The notion of mystical mimesis goes back to Plato: in *Republic* 7, for instance, Socrates at the end of the allegory of the cave suggests to Glaucon that it is only by glimpsing the true source of truth and reason in the realm in the intelligible that a person can become wise (517b-c). Similarly in the *Symposium* Diotima tells Socrates that it is only by gazing on the true source of beauty with the mind's eye that one can give birth to true beauty, conveying the notion of replication with the metaphor of childbirth (211e-212a).

the tendency of most people to indiscriminately imitate their social superiors.) Artistic mimesis serves as a metaphor for both ethical and mystical mimesis in this passage: Moses, by receiving the imprint of the divine, has become an archetype to be replicated through a process of stamping or imprinting on the souls of those who contemplate his life.

Another idea of mimesis is in the background of this passage: in writing *De Vita Mosis* Philo is himself attempting to create a good reproduction of the original portrait, a picture of Moses that will communicate his god-like character for the reader's ethical benefit. Artistic mimesis is thus not just a metaphor for ethical mimesis, but an aid to it: the ethically useful biography is one in which the author's artistic mimesis of a worthy person leads the reader into ethical mimesis of that person. This idea is unspoken in this passage from *De Vita Mosis*, but Eusebius makes it explicit in the prologue to *VC*, when he says that he is obligated to record the morally edifying life of Constantine for those who are stirred to longing for divine love by the "mimesis of noble things," ἡ τῶν καλῶν μίμησις (*VC* 1.10.2; see p.72 *supra*).[29]

[29] In fact there is some ambivalence in Eusebius' use of the word μίμησις here that exploits the connection between ethical and artistic mimesis. This is one of eleven usages of μίμησις and its cognates in *VC*. In seven instances the meaning is unambiguously ethical [Constantine imitates Christ (4.22.2), Moses (1.20.2), and God (4.29.4); he teaches his sons to imitate his own piety (4.52.1); emulation of Constantius incites Constantine to imitation of good things (1.12.3); Licinius stopped imitating Constantine, the friend of God (1.49.2); Eusebius imitates painters in writing *VC* (1.10.1)]. In three it is clearly artistic [Christ tells Constantine in a dream to make a replica of the heavenly sign (1.29); Constantine tells the artisans to replicate the sign as he describes it on awaking (1.30; here he uses ἀπομιμεῖσθαι, perhaps to indicate that the physical copy is several stages removed from the original); Constantine represents a scriptural prophecy in a painting (3.33.3)]. In this instance from the prologue, however, though the reference is most obviously to artistic mimesis (as Cameron and Hall translate, "the representation of noble deeds"), the ethical meaning would also make sense – Eusebius could conceivably

A similar concatenation of the concepts of ethical, mystical, and artistic mimesis can be found in Eusebius' oration for the dedication of the cathedral at Tyre (*HE* 10.4). The event took place ca. 315, before Licinius began to show hostility to the church; the cathedral had been re-built on a grand scale at parishioners' expense on the site of a church that was destroyed during the persecution.[30] Eusebius weaves a description of the cathedral into an allegorical interpretation in which the building represents the spiritual church. The cathedral building itself has been allegorically constructed: it is a copy of a heavenly model, according to Eusebius.[31]

> Our pre-eminent and great High Priest says that the son does whatever he sees the father doing (*John* 5.19). Likewise [Paulinus], with the pure eyes of the mind looking to the pre-eminent one as to a teacher, has made likenesses of all the things he sees him making, reproducing them to the best of his ability like someone working from archetypes or patterns. And so he is the equal of the renowned Bezalel, whom God himself filled with the spirit of wisdom and understanding and of all artistic and technical knowledge and called to craft the temple furnishings as tokens of heavenly types (*Exodus* 31.1ff.). In the same way he also, bearing in his very soul the likeness of Christ entire, the Word, the Wisdom, and the Light, has constructed with indescribable generosity this magnificent temple of God Most High. Like the visible manifestation of something invisible, it corresponds in its nature to the pattern of the more excellent one....[32]

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be saying that he writes for those in whom desire for divine love is aroused through their own mimesis of noble things, their own attempts to live a virtuous life in imitation of another.

[30] For the date see Barnes 1981, 162.

[31] Eusebius borrows this concept from *Hebrews* 8.5: "[The Jews] in their worship use signs and shadows of heavenly things, just as Moses when he was about to build the tabernacle received a divine warning telling him, 'See, you will make everything according to the pattern that was shown to you on the mountain.'" οἵτινες ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ λατρεύουσιν τῶν ἐπουρανίων, καθὼς κεκρημάτισται Μωϋσῆς μέλλων ἐπιτελεῖν τὴν σκηνήν, "Ορα," γάρ φησιν, "ποιήσεις πάντα κατὰ τὸν τύπον τὸν δειχθέντα σοι ἐν τῷ ὄρει." The quotation in *Hebrews* is from *Exodus* 25.40. This section of *Hebrews* contains a lengthy discussion of temple worship as a material symbol of the spiritual reality constituted by Christ and the Christian experience: Eusebius' oration is a variation on this theme, substituting the cathedral at Tyre for the Jewish temple.

[32] ὁ μὲν οὖν πρῶτος καὶ μέγας ἡμῶν ἀρχιερεὺς ὅσα βλέπει τὸν πατέρα ποιοῦντα, ταῦτα, φησίν, ὁμοίως καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ποιεῖ· ὃ δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ὡς ἂν ἐπὶ διδάσκαλον τὸν πρῶτον καθαροῖς νοὸς ὄμμασιν ἀφορῶν, ὅσα βλέπει ποιοῦντα, ὡς ἂν ἀρχετύποις χρώμενος παραδείγμασιν, τούτων

Eusebius suggests a chain of mimesis – the first person of the trinity imprints on the second, and the second on bishop Paulinus. This mystical mimesis has both an ethical and an artistic component: it makes Paulinus the paragon of virtue that he is, and it also enables him to design a building that has deep spiritual significance, in itself an act of great virtue. Eusebius describes the building (our earliest *ekphrasis* of a Christian church) and then explains that there was a spiritual reality that served as archetype: "This [building] is a marvel of seemingly impossible magnitude, especially for those who pay attention only to external appearances. But surpassing all marvels are the archetypes of the things we see here, their intelligible prototypes and divine patterns, that is, the renewal in our souls of the spiritual building that God inhabits."[33] The Christian community, originally built by Christ in his own image, was brought low by the persecutions but then rescued by Christ. Paulinus was entrusted with the spiritual rebuilding of the congregation at Tyre, a process that Eusebius views as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (*HE* 10.4.56-62).

> From that day till this [Paulinus] has been building, fitting together now the sparkling gold, now the silver, tried and true, now the valuable precious stones among you all. So his actions toward you are another fulfillment of the sacred, mystical prophecy that says, "Behold, I am preparing for you ruby for your

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τὰς εἰκόνας, ὡς ἔνι μάλιστα δυνατόν, εἰς τὸ ὁμοιότατον δημιουργῶν ἀπειργάσατο, οὐδὲν ἐκείνῳ καταλιπὼν τῷ Βεσελεηλ, ὃν αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς πνεύματος ἐμπλήσας σοφίας καὶ συνέσεως καὶ τῆς ἄλλης ἐντέχνου καὶ ἐπιστημονικῆς γνώσεως, τῆς τῶν οὐρανίων τύπων διὰ συμβόλων ναοῦ κατασκευῆς δημιουργὸν ἀνακέκληται. ταύτῃ δ' οὖν καὶ ὅδε Χριστὸν ὅλον, τὸν λόγον, τὴν σοφίαν, τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ ἀγαλματοφορῶν ψυχῇ οὐδ' εἴστιν εἰπεῖν οἵᾳ σὺν μεγαλοφροσύνῃ...τὸν μεγαλοπρεπῆ τόνδε θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου νεὼν τῷ τοῦ κρείττονος παραδείγματι, ὡς ἂν ὁρώμενον μὴ ὁρωμένου, τὴν φύσιν ἐμφερῆ συνεστήσατο... (*HE* 10.4.25-26).

[33] θαῦμα μὲν οὖν μέγιστον τοῦτο καὶ πέρα πάσης ἐκπλήξεως, μάλιστα τοῖς ἐπὶ μόνῃ τῇ τῶν ἔξωθεν φαντασίᾳ τὸν νοῦν προσανέχουσιν· θαυμάτων δὲ θαυμασιώτερα τά τε ἀρχέτυπα καὶ τούτων τὰ πρωτότυπα νοητὰ καὶ θεοπρεπῆ παραδείγματα, τὰ τῆς ἐνθέου φημὶ καὶ λογικῆς ἐν ψυχαῖς οἰκοδομῆς ἀνανεώματα (*HE* 10.4.55).

> stone, sapphire for your foundations, jasper for your battlements, stones of crystal for your gates, choice stones for your wall. And all your sons will be taught by God and your children will enjoy a great peace, and you will be built in justice" (*Isaiah* 54.11-14). And in justice he does build, discerning the abilities of each member of the laity according to his merits. With some of them he simply enclosed the outer precinct, building a wall of steady faith – this was the great majority of the congregation, those who are unable to support a heavier structure.[34]

Eusebius goes on to describe the spiritual edifice built by Paulinus, reiterating many of the features that he mentioned in the ekphrasis of the building but giving them a spiritual reference: those congregants who welcome outsiders are the gates to the courtyard, those who have studied the gospels are the bases of the four great pillars, the catechumens are the outbuildings, and so on (*HE* 10.4.63-68).

Paulinus carries out this spiritual architecture in imitation of Christ:

> Such is the great temple which the Logos, the great creator of all things, has constructed throughout the whole inhabited world beneath the sun, fashioning anew this spiritual likeness on earth of the heavenly vaults of another realm, so that throughout all creation and among the rational creatures of the earth his father might be honored and worshipped.[35]

Thus the cathedral building at Tyre is a replica three times removed from the original: Christ has replicated the heavenly cathedral by building the world-wide Christian

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[34] ...ἐκ πρώτης ὡς εἰπεῖν ἡμέρας οἰκοδομῶν οὔπω καὶ εἰς δεῦρο πέπαυται, τοτὲ μὲν διαυγῆ τὸν χρυσόν, τοτὲ δὲ δόκιμον καὶ καθαρὸν τὸ ἀργύριον καὶ τοὺς τιμίους καὶ πολυτελεῖς λίθους ἐν πᾶσιν ὑμῖν ἁρμόττων, ὡς ἱερὰν αὖθις καὶ μυστικὴν ἔργοις τοῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς ἀποπληροῦν προφητείαν, δι' ἧς εἴρηται, "Ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἑτοιμάζω σοι ἄνθρακα τὸν λίθον σου καὶ τὰ θεμέλιά σου σάπφειρον καὶ τὰς ἐπάλξεις σου ἴασπιν καὶ τὰς πύλας σου λίθους κρυστάλλου καὶ τὸν περίβολόν σου λίθους ἐκλεκτοὺς καὶ πάντας τοὺς υἱούς σου διδακτοὺς θεοῦ καὶ ἐν πολλῇ εἰρήνῃ τὰ τέκνα σου· καὶ ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ οἰκοδομηθήσῃ." δικαιοσύνῃ δῆτα οἰκοδομῶν, κατ' ἀξίαν τοῦ παντὸς λαοῦ διῄρει τὰς δυνάμεις, οἷς μὲν τὸν ἔξωθεν αὐτὸ μόνον περιφράττων περίβολον, τὴν ἁπλανῆ πίστιν περιτειχίσας (πολὺς δὲ ὁ τοιοῦτος καὶ μέγας λεώς, οὐδὲν κρεῖττον φέρειν οἰκοδόμημα διαρκῶν)... (*HE* 10.4.61-63).

[35] τοιοῦτος ὁ μέγας νεὼς ὃν καθ' ὅλης τῆς ὑφ' ἥλιον οἰκουμένης ὁ μέγας τῶν ὅλων δημιουργὸς λόγος συνεστήσατο, τῶν ἐπέκεινα οὐρανίων ἀψίδων πάλιν καὶ αὐτὸς νοερὰν ταύτην ἐπὶ γῆς εἰκόνα κατεργασάμενος, ὡς ἂν διὰ πάσης τῆς κτίσεως τῶν τε ἐπὶ γῆς λογικῶν ζῴων ὁ πατὴρ αὐτῷ τιμῷτό τε καὶ σέβοιτο (*HE* 10.4.69).

community, and Paulinus has replicated the world-wide church in his local congregation and then replicated that spiritual structure in the physical shape of the cathedral. The goal of this chain of mimesis is a form of mimesis that is both ethical and mystical: it is meant to enable the congregants of the cathedral at Tyre to replicate as far as possible the worship of God and communion with God that continually takes place among the spiritual beings in heaven (*HE* 10.4.70-71).

The intimate connection that these two passages presuppose between mystical, ethical, and artistic mimesis is characteristic of a typical late antique approach to art that has been called "mystic viewing."[36] Mystic viewing functions through mimesis, in that an art object that is subject to mystic viewing must replicate a divine reality, and the effect on the viewer is to replicate some small part of that divine reality in the viewer's soul, through a true mystical experience, perhaps, or at least through ethical imitation. André Grabar in a classic essay explored the ways in which the perspective techniques of late antique and Byzantine art are accommodated to this understanding of art.[37] What he calls "reverse perspective," in particular, which uses the techniques of perspective from the point of view of the subject of the picture rather than of the viewer (so that everything in the picture appears to diminish in size as one moves away from the subject, even items that are between the viewer and the subject) has the effect of situating the viewer in the center of the image, so that the viewer identifies with

[36] See Elsner 1995, ch. 3.
[37] Grabar 1945.

whatever sacred person or event is being depicted.[38] This visual assimilation was to be a first step toward ethical assimilation: in contemplating an image of Christ, for instance, from the perspective of the Christ being depicted in the image, the viewer should experience a sense of union with Christ and advance toward the goal of ethical Christ-likeness. Mystic image-viewing is meant to replicate or even to induce spiritual contemplation, by creating a sense of union with the transcendent. Plotinus describes his own mystical experiences as a disorienting loss of the sense of self;[39] it was for conveying this experience, according to Grabar, that late antique and Byzantine artists found the technique of reverse perspective particularly useful. We will see that Eusebius approximates this technique in one passage in *VC* (p.157-8 *infra*).

***Visual Arts in* VC**

Slaying the Serpent

The clearest statement in *VC* of Eusebius' belief that products of the visual arts can convey deeper truth is in the interpretation of a painting placed above the entrance to the palace (*VC* 3.3). This passage has a prominent place near the beginning of Book 3. The book opens with a digression in the narrative of the events leading to the Council of Nicaea: an extended *synkrisis* of Constantine and the persecuting emperors (*VC* 3.1) leads into the description of the painting, which is adduced as an example of the

[38] Grabar 1945, 46-57; see esp. plates 5 and 11.
[39] *E.g. Enneades* 6.9.3.11.

emperor's παρρησία in proclaiming the Christian message. The painting contained an emblem that Eusebius, at least, perceived as a plainly Christian symbol, though what it was exactly is quite unclear.

> He was totally forthright, now sealing his face with the sign of salvation, now taking pride in the trophy of victory, which he displayed for the eyes of all to see on a painted tablet hung very high before the palace vestibule. On the painting he showed the sign of salvation above his head and the hostile beast, the enemy that besieged the church of God through the tyranny of the godless ones, he depicted being carried away into the deep in the form of a serpent. For the oracles name him a serpent and a crooked snake in the books of the prophets of God. For this reason the emperor displayed to everyone in the encaustic painting the serpent beneath his own feet and those of his sons, pierced with a weapon through the middle of its body and falling into the depths of the sea. In this way he somehow portrayed in riddling fashion the invisible enemy of the human race and showed that it was also the power of the trophy of salvation above his head that had caused this enemy to sink into the depths of destruction. This was the allegory expressed by the picture with its brilliant colors. But I was struck with amazement at the loftiness of the emperor's thoughts, that by divine inspiration he depicted those things that the voices of the prophets somehow proclaimed about this beast, saying "God will bring the great and fearful sword against the serpent, the crooked snake, against the serpent, the snake that flees, and will destroy the serpent that is in the sea" (*Isaiah* 27.1). The emperor indeed portrayed likenesses of these things, truthfully representing them in the painting.[40]

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[40] φανερὸν ἑαυτὸν καθίστη, νῦν μὲν τὸ πρόσωπον τῷ σωτηρίῳ κατασφραγιζόμενος σημείῳ, νῦν δ' ἐναβρυνόμενος τῷ νικητικῷ τροπαίῳ, ὅ δὴ καὶ ἐν γραφῆς ὑψηλοτάτῳ πίνακι πρὸ τῶν βασιλικῶν προθύρων ἀνακειμένῳ τοῖς πάντων ὀφθαλμοῖς ὁρᾶσθαι προὐτίθει, τὸ μὲν σωτήριον σημεῖον ὑπερκείμενον τῆς αὐτοῦ κεφαλῆς τῇ γραφῇ παραδούς, τὸν δ' ἐχθρὸν καὶ πολέμιον θῆρα τὸν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ τῆς τῶν ἀθέων πολιορκήσαντα τυραννίδος κατὰ βυθοῦ φερόμενον ποιήσας ἐν δράκοντος μορφῇ. δράκοντα γὰρ αὐτὸν καὶ σκολιὸν ὄφιν ἐν προφητῶν θεοῦ βίβλοις ἀνηγόρευε τὰ λόγια. διὸ καὶ βασιλεὺς ὑπὸ τοῖς αὐτοῦ τε καὶ τῶν αὐτοῦ παίδων ποσὶ βέλει πεπαρμένον κατὰ μέσου τοῦ κύτους βυθοῖς τε θαλάττης ἀπερριμμένον διὰ τῆς κηροχύτου γραφῆς ἐδείκνυ τοῖς πᾶσι τὸν δράκοντα, ὧδέ πῃ τὸν ἀφανῆ τοῦ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένους πολέμιον αἰνιττόμενος, ὃν καὶ δυνάμει τοῦ ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς ἀνακειμένου σωτηρίου τροπαίου κατὰ βυθῶν ἀπολείας κεχωρηκέναι ἐδήλου. ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν ἄνθη χρωμάτων ἠνίττετο διὰ τῆς εἰκόνος· ἐμὲ δὲ θαῦμα τῆς βασιλέως κατεῖχε μεγαλονοίας, ὡς ἐμπνεύσει θείᾳ ταῦτα διετύπου, ἃ δὴ φωναὶ προφητῶν ὧδέ που περὶ τοῦδε τοῦ θηρὸς ἐβόων, ἐπάξειν τὸν θεόν λέγουσαι "τὴν μάχαιραν τὴν μεγάλην καὶ φοβερὰν ἐπὶ τὸν δράκοντα ὄφιν τὸν σκολιόν, ἐπὶ τὸν δράκοντα ὄφιν τὸν φεύγοντα, καὶ ἀνελεῖν τὸν δράκοντα τὸν ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ." εἰκόνας δὴ τούτων διετύπου βασιλεύς, ἀληθῶς ἐντιθεὶς μιμήματα τῇ σκιαγραφίᾳ (*VC* 3.2.2-3.3.3). Eusebius quotes *Isaiah* 27.1 loosely: Τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἐπάξει ὁ θεὸς τὴν μάχαιραν τὴν ἁγίαν καὶ τὴν

The key elements of the description are the serpent at the bottom being pierced by a weapon of some sort; the emperor and his sons in the middle of the picture, portrayed as dominant in some way over the serpent; and the Christian emblem at the top. There are various possible ways of putting these elements together that would be reasonably consistent with Eusebius' description;[41] our main concern with this passage

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μεγάλην καὶ τὴν ἰσχυρὰν ἐπὶ τὸν δράκοντα ὄφιν θεύγοντα, ἐπὶ τὸν δράκοντα ὄφιν σκολιὸν καὶ ἀνελεῖ τὸν δράκοντα.

[41] Mango suggests that the emperor is shown piercing the serpent with the labarum. Bronze coins struck at Constantinople in 327/8 with the legend SPES PUBLICA depict the labarum with a snake underneath, seemingly being pierced by the end of the shaft. (See Bruun 1966, 572-3 and plate 18; also shown at Cameron and Hall 1999, 209. On the typical form of the *vexillum*, with lance point at the top of the staff and a spike at the lower end for planting in the ground, see Rostovtzeff 1942, 94.) Mango's very reasonable suggestion would simply add full-length figures of the emperor and his sons to the image on the coins. On the other hand, Eusebius could be describing the coin image with no changes at all, the pictures of Constantine and his sons simply being those on the labarum. This seems to be the solution favored by Cameron and Hall in their note *ad loc*., and its economy is appealing; its disadvantage is that it requires us to ignore Eusebius' reference to the feet of the emperor and his sons.

Grabar (1936, 44) and Leeb (1992, 49-52) interpret the painting as a *calcatio* scene, emphasizing Eusebius' reference to feet rather than to the piercing of the serpent. This has the unfortunate result of taking them away from the SPES PUBLICA coin type, the only extant image from the period (and the first in the emperors' iconography) to show a snake as an enemy. Instead they cite less relevant *comparanda*: Grabar refers to fifth-century Byzantine coins showing the emperor trampling a serpent with a human head, and Leeb adduces a frieze sarcophagus of the early fourth century from Spain that shows a young man, presumably Christ, standing rather placidly on top of a lion encircled by a snake, an illustration of *Psalm* 90 (91).13, "You will tread on the asp and the basilisk, and you will trample the lion and the serpent" (see Leeb 1992, figure 16; also shown at Brenk 1980, 44). Leeb, rejecting the generally accepted date of ca. 310 for the sarcophagus, argues that the image of Christ trampling the lion and snake is derived from the picture described by Eusebius; he proceeds from the widely-held assumption that the iconography of Christ in this period is derived from that of the emperor (see n. 52 *infra*). Brenk (1980, 44) is surely right to argue that the sarcophagus image, which gives Christ no particularly imperial traits, is not connected with the Constantinian image.

It is quite unnecessary in any case to suppose that a cross is depicted free-standing at the top of the composition. The chi-rho on the labarum, the cross shape formed by the cross-bar of the labarum, or a chi-rho on the emperor's helmet (as shown on *e.g*. a silver medallion struck at Ticinum in 315; see Bruun 1966, 364) would each be adequate justification for Eusebius' reference to the "saving sign" and the "victorious trophy." References by the church fathers to battle standards and trophies as unintended but highly significant images of the cross are well known (see Justin, *Apologia* 1.55.3, Origen, *Commentaria in Ioannem* 20.36, and Minutius Felix, *Octavius* 29.7), and it is likely, given the non-existence of physical evidence for Constantine's iconographic use of the cross, that when Eusebius and Constantine (*VC* 4.9,

is not to attempt to reconstruct the picture that it describes but to observe the use to which Eusebius puts the picture.

Eusebius offers two interpretations of the picture. First he says that Constantine depicted in the form of a serpent the demonic enemy who caused the persecutions and showed himself and his sons defeating the serpent. He suggests that Constantine chose the symbol of the serpent because he understood the ending of the persecution as the fulfillment of a prophecy from *Isaiah*. Constantine does refer to a serpent in a letter to Eusebius (*VC* 2.46.2); he seems to equate the serpent with Licinius, as Eusebius also does at *VC* 2.1.2. But here Eusebius opens up a wider range of reference: if the serpent is the supernatural enemy of the church that caused the persecutions, its defeat by Constantine could be understood as referring not just to the defeat of Licinius but to various other events narrated in Books 1 and 2 and summarized in the *synkrisis* that precedes this passage, including the defeat of Maxentius and the measures taken to restore the fortunes of the church. Having credited Constantine with designing the picture with this already quite spiritualized meaning, Eusebius goes on to say that there is another, more esoteric allegorical meaning, which the emperor "somehow portrayed in riddling fashion." According to this second interpretation, the serpent still represents an evil supernatural power, but this time it is described in more universal terms as the

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the letter to Shapur, and *VC* 2.55.1, the Letter to the Provincials of the East) use expressions such as "saving sign" they mean the chi-rho and/or the labarum's cross-like shape. See Bleicken 1992, 36-42, for a fuller statement of this position. For an instance of the convergence of the iconography of the trophy, the labarum, the chi-rho, and the cross in a symbolic image on a sarcophagus of the Constantinian period see Brenk 1980, 42-43. According to the numismatist Patrick Bruun, unambiguously Christian symbols were rare or non-existent in the coinage of Constantine; see Bruun 1966, 61-64.

enemy of the human race, not just the author of the recent persecutions, and its defeat has been brought about not by Constantine but by "the power of the trophy of salvation." The victory in question here is the one that Eusebius says the priests explained to Constantine after his vision of the cross, the victory of Christ over death.[42] Eusebius twice uses the verb αἰνίττεσθαι, a common indicator of allegorical interpretation, to refer to this second, more general interpretation. The painting depicts the cosmic struggle of Christ against the power of death in the form of a riddle which must be interpreted, and Eusebius provides the interpretation by pointing out the connection between the emblem at the top and the defeat of the serpent. He then cites the *Isaiah* passage more fully and concludes that the emperor has "truthfully represented" the content of the scripture in the painting. By juxtaposing the terms μιμήματα and ἀληθῶς he clearly indicates his positive view of artistic mimesis as capable of representing spiritual reality.

Eusebius is providing the reader with the interpretation that will enable him to view or to imagine the painting as an initiate.[43] It is risky without a better knowledge of the picture's contents to say much about how it might have been interpreted by other viewers, but it is fairly clear that Eusebius has given a somewhat distorted interpretation. The "saving sign" may not have been an unambiguously Christian

[42] See Gillman 1961 on the prevalence in this period of the understanding of the crucifixion as a victory over death.
[43] *Cf.* the first-century C.E. *Tabula Cebetis*, in which a wise old man reveals the secret meaning of an allegorical painting. On the interpretation of *Tabula Cebetis* according to the various philosophical traditions see pp.20-7 in the edition of Fitzgerald and White; for discussion of the art-historical context see Elsner 1995, 39-50.

emblem (see n.41 *supra*); even if it was, the incorporation of such an emblem in an image of imperial victory would not suggest to many viewers that they should read it as an image of Christ's victory over death. Even the identification of the emperor's victory as being over the demonic enemy of the church, which Eusebius presents as quite uncontroversial, would be unlikely to occur to non-Christian viewers, at least.

As is common in *ekphraseis* by ancient writers, Eusebius conveys a sense of amazement associated with the experience of viewing the painting.[44] What Eusebius finds astonishing in this picture is not really a part of the picture at all: it is Constantine's μεγαλονοία, the quality that, along with divine inspiration, enabled him to embed a soteriological allegory into the picture by including the Christian emblem at the top of the composition. He makes it clear that this information about the emperor is a separate message that he takes from the picture and gives it particular emphasis by placing it second in a μέν...δέ... construction. The painting, he says, allegorically depicted Christ's defeat of the spiritual enemy of the human race, but what particularly struck him as he viewed it (ἐμὲ δὲ...) was what it revealed about the emperor's spiritual and intellectual capacity. Eusebius' assumption that allegorical interpretation depends on allegorical composition enables him to view a work of art as in part a depiction of the artist's mind. Because he attributes the design of the painting to Constantine, Eusebius' description of the painting not only provides an opportunity to reiterate the

[44] See *e.g.* Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 35.36.83, on the admiration evoked by a large canvas that was empty except for three very fine superimposed lines painted by Apelles and Protogenes; and 35.36.88-89, on paintings by Apelles so lifelike that, *incredibile dictu*, physiognomists were able to predict the year of the subject's death.

message of the gospel for the reader's benefit but constitutes a telling and edifying detail in the "verbal portrait" of the emperor.

The only explicit reference to mimesis in the passage is to Constantine's mimetic representation of biblical truth through art, but the overlay of different types of mimesis that we found in the speech on the cathedral at Tyre is present here as well. In that speech Eusebius says that Paulinus imitated Christ's building of the world-wide church through his restoration of the local congregation and of their cathedral after the persecution (*HE* 10.4.25). The same principle of local, temporal replication of a more cosmic divine activity is at work in this passage as well, in that according to Eusebius' interpretation of the picture Constantine and his sons through their ending of the persecution replicate Christ's defeat of the enemy of the human race. There is thus a possible double meaning to the expression ἀληθῶς μιμήματα ἐντιθείς: the picture *in toto* is a μίμημα of the prophecy, and this is the most obvious sense of Eusebius' words, but furthermore the primary subject of the picture, Constantine's victory, is a μίμημα of Christ's victory. Also hovering in the background of this passage is the idea of the reader's mimesis of Constantine. Though the reader is not expressly enjoined in this passage to imitate the emperor, that idea is always a subtext when Constantine's virtues are being described. The description of the picture is provided as an example of the emperor's παρρησία in proclaiming Christ, which is in turn an example of the emperor's virtue, "bestowed on the race of mortals by the wisdom of God," ἐκ θεοῦ

σοφίας τῷ θνητῷ γένει δεδωρημένον (*VC* 3.2.2). This expression recalls similar ones in the prologue, where Eusebius adds παράδειγμα and ὑπόδειγμα, "as a model."[45]

By describing the picture as he does, Eusebius makes it function not just as a digression in the account of the council of Nicaea, but as an illustration of that episode. Two paragraphs after this passage, the idea of the "invisible enemy" recurs, when Eusebius attributes to Constantine the statement that the doctrinal dispute was "another war in which he had to prevail against the invisible enemy that was harassing the church."[46] With this verbal echo of his interpretation of the serpent in the picture, Eusebius makes the council of Nicaea another referent, along with the defeat of Licinius and the ending of the persecution, for the symbolic image of serpent-slaying.

Images of Pentecost

The account of the council of Nicaea is one of the best places in *VC* to observe how Eusebius uses the language of art and ceremony to weave themes through the work as a whole. Eusebius makes the council a sort of bridge between the wars he has described in Books 1 and 2 and the peacetime accomplishments of Books 3 and 4. When Eusebius compares the summoning of the clergy to Nicaea with the marshalling

[45] "[God] put this man forward as a lesson in godliness for the race of mortals," διδασκαλίαν θεοσεβοῦς ὑποδείγματος τὸν ἄνδρα τῳ θνητῷ γένει προβεβλημένος (*VC* 1.4.1); "He established him as a clear model of the godly life for all people," ἐναργὲς ἅπασιν ἀνθρώποις παράδειγμα θεοσεβοῦς κατέστη βίου (*VC* 1.3.4).

[46] ἄλλον τουτονὶ καταγωνιεῖσθαι δεῖν ἔφη τὸν κατὰ τοῦ ταράττοντος τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἀφανοῦς ἐχθροῦ πόλεμον (*VC* 3.5.3). *Cf.*, in the description of the painting, τὸν ἀφανῆ τοῦ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένους πολέμιον (3.3.2) and τὸν δ' ἐχθρὸν καὶ πολέμιον θῆρα τὸν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ τῆς τῶν ἀθέων πολιορκήσαντα τυραννίδος (3.3.1).

of a legion (*VC* 3.6), he is linking this event to the earlier wars represented by the serpent: Constantine's struggle to unify the church is an ongoing war whose outcome, at this point in the narrative, is yet to be determined. But when he describes the actual gathering of the clergy in Nicaea, he uses a metaphor with an entirely different referent: the gathering of the clergy is a votive offering made by Constantine to celebrate the end of war and the return of peace (*VC* 3.7.2).[47] This paradox no doubt reflects Eusebius' experience of the event. Licinius had banned episcopal gatherings, so however contentious the controversy (and Eusebius, who was fighting to avoid excommunication, probably felt as embattled as anyone present), the assembling of over 300 clergy at the emperor's expense must have been in and of itself a cause for celebration.[48] It was Constantine's still recent victory over Licinius that created the conditions of peace necessary for the council to be convened. Eusebius uses two metaphors to make this point, describing the ecumenical gathering of clergy as both a crown and a picture, two traditional votive gifts.[49] Having described the gathering once already as "like a great crown of priests, a colorful creation of all sorts of flowers" (μέγιστον ἱερέων στέφανον οἷόν τινα ἐξ ἀνθέων καταπεποικιλμένον, *VC* 3.6.2) and then listed all the places from which delegates came, Eusebius goes on:

> Constantine was the only emperor in history to make such a crown for Christ, weaving it with ribbons of peace. He dedicated it to his savior as a thank-

[47] The emperor bringing offerings will become a theme of Byzantine art, most famously exemplified in the mosaics of Justinian and Theodora at the Church of San Vitale in Ravenna. See Grabar 1936, 106-11.
[48] See Barnes 1981, 214-19.
[49] Eusebius has in fact transferred this idea from the serpent picture, which probably was a votive gift, though he never mentioned that fact, choosing instead to view it as an example of the emperor's παρρησία.

> offering for his victory over enemies in war, an offering fit for God, having formed of us this image of the apostolic choir. For the word says of them as well that "from every nation under heaven" there were gathered "devout men," among whom were "Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judaea, and Cappadocia...(*Acts* 2.5, 9)."[50]

By calling the gathering of clergy for the council both Constantine's victory crown and an image of the gathering at Pentecost, when the apostles experienced the arrival of the Holy Spirit that Jesus had promised and Jews from all over the empire were converted as a result of hearing them miraculously preach in a variety of languages (see *Acts* 2), Eusebius again sets up a mimetic relationship between Constantine and Christ. It is the fact that the priests are gathered together from various places for one purpose that suggests to Eusebius the metaphor of a crown woven from a variety of flowers. The original gathering at Pentecost was the emblematic expression of this unity in diversity; it can be considered Christ's crown of victory, in that the accomplishments of Christ in the spiritual realm, to which Eusebius has just alluded in the description of the serpent picture, created the conditions necessary for the new era that began with Pentecost, just as Constantine's victories made assemblies of bishops possible again. Like the comparison of Moses and Constantine, the reference to Pentecost is typological, in that Eusebius is discerning correspondences between two parallel phenomena. As is typical of typology, he again gives one phenomenon a certain

[50] τοιοῦτον μόνος ἐξ αἰῶνος εἷς βασιλεὺς Κωνσταντῖνος Χριστῷ στέφανον δεσμῷ συνάψας εἰρήνης, τῷ αὐτοῦ σωτῆρι τῆς κατ' ἐχθρῶν καὶ πολεμίων νίκης θεοπρεπὲς ἀνετίθει χαριστήριον, εἰκόνα χορείας ἀποστολικῆς ταύτην καθ' ἡμᾶς συστησάμενος. Ἐπεὶ καὶ κατ' ἐκείνους συνῆχθαι λόγος "ἀπὸ παντὸς ἔθνους τῶν ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν" "ἄνδρας εὐλαβεῖς" ἐν οἷς ἐτύγχανον "Πάρθοι καὶ Μῆδοι καὶ Ἐλαμῖται, καὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὴν Μεσοποταμίαν Ἰουδαίαν τε καὶ Καππαδοκίαν..." (*VC* 3.7.2-3.8).

precedence over the other, saying that the council was superior to Pentecost in that it was a gathering composed entirely of "ministers of God," θεοῦ λειτουργῶν (*VC* 3.8). The comparison is meant to highlight the sense of new freedom and energy that Eusebius perceived with the establishment of Constantine's rule in the east and to suggest that the change reflects a new spiritual as well as temporal state of affairs. By equating the gatherings with a thank-offering, Eusebius adds another layer to the typology for readers with sufficient knowledge, alluding to the *original* Pentecost, the Hebrew festival of weeks, when offerings were made in thanksgiving for the wheat harvest (*Leviticus* 23.15-20).

The council of Nicaea ended with a banquet for the bishops hosted by the emperor in the palace in honor of his *vicennalia*; Eusebius calls it a "victory feast," ἐπινίκιον ἑορτήν, and again attributes to Constantine the idea that the council was a victory over the enemy of the church (*VC* 3.14-15). Again the gathering of bishops is described as an offering (in this case a sacrifice, θυσίαν) that Constantine made to God. Eusebius professes inability to describe the event, but the language of mimesis helps him out of his *aporia*: "One might have thought that he was seeing in his mind's eye a picture of the kingdom of Christ, and that what was happening was a dream rather than reality."[51] By reclining for a meal together with the bishops Constantine has created a replica of a heavenly banquet – another typological comparison with many possible

[51] Χριστοῦ βασιλείας ἔδοξεν ἄν τις φαντασιοῦσθαι εἰκόνα, ὄναρ τ' εἶναι ἀλλ' οὐχ ὕπαρ τὸ γιγνόμενον (*VC* 3.15.2).

references, the most obvious of which are the last supper and the eucharist, also replicas of the otherworldly prototype that Eusebius asks the reader to envision.[52]

The description of the council of Nicaea as a picture of Pentecost points ahead to two other events to which Eusebius gives particular prominence, the dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre by an assembly of clergy at Jerusalem, and the death of Constantine. In his account of the former, Eusebius does not make an explicit comparison to Pentecost, but the reference to *Acts* 2 is unmistakable in his list of the places of origin of those who attended, ending with "all Syria and Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, Arabia and Palestine itself, Egypt, Libya, and the inhabitants of the Theban territory, all together filled up the chorus of God," Συρία τε πᾶσα καὶ Μεσοποταμία, Φοινίκη τε καὶ 'Αραβία σὺν αὐτῇ Παλαιστίνῃ, Αἴγυπτός τε καὶ Λιβύη, οἵ τε τὴν Θηβαίων οἰκοῦντες χώραν, πάντες ὁμοῦ ἐπλήρουν τὴν μεγάλην τοῦ θεοῦ χορείαν (*VC* 4.43.4). Eusebius compares the assembly at Jerusalem to the council of Nicaea, again using the metaphor of a votive gift:

> The emperor convened this second synod, the greatest of those we know, in Jerusalem, after the famous first one, a glorious event held in the capital of Bithynia. The first one was a victory celebration; it was held during his *vicennalia* in Nicaea, the city of Victory, fulfilling a vow in exchange for the defeat of his enemies in war. But the second adorned the completion of his third decade, and at it the emperor consecrated to God, the giver of all good things, the *martyrium* around the savior's tomb as an offering of peace. [53]

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[52] It is interesting to note that Eusebius is suggesting an assimilation of the emperor's real-life activities to artistic portrayals of Christ, quite the opposite of the model usually applied to the art of this period, which posits the assimilation of images of Christ to the images and real-life activities of the emperor. For the most complete and influential expression of the traditional model see Grabar 1968a, esp. pp. 31-54; for a forceful critique see Mathews 1993, esp. ch. 1.

[53] Ταύτην μεγίστην ὧν ἴσμεν σύνοδον δευτέραν συνεκρότει βασιλεὺς ἐν τοῖς 'Ιεροσολύμοις μετὰ τὴν πρώτην ἐκείνην, ἣν ἐπὶ τῆς Βιθυνῶν διαφανῶς πεποίητο πόλεως. ἀλλ' ἡ μὲν ἐπινίκιος ἦν, ἐν εἰκοσαετηρίδι τῆς βασιλείας τὴν κατ' ἐχθρῶν καὶ πολεμίων εὐχὴν ἐπ' αὐτῆς

The vicennial and tricennial celebrations had been established as an important theme in the opening sentence of *VC*, where Eusebius described his own speech at the latter event as a crown of words that he placed on the emperor's head. By emphasizing the link between the two ecclesiastical events and the anniversary celebrations he creates a sense of unity and symmetry in his narrative, which is enhanced by the limited and repetitive symbolic vocabulary that he uses to describe the events: the votive offering and the feast or festival, particularly the festival of Pentecost.[54] The idea of the votive offering, which was so clearly metaphorical in the account of the Council of Nicaea, in this account shades from metaphorical to literal, as Eusebius moves from describing the Council of Nicaea as fulfilling a vow, to the council of Jerusalem as "adorning" the third decade, to the dedication of a peace offering in the form of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.[55]

Νικαίας ἐκτελοῦσα, ἡ δὲ τῆς τρίτης δεκάδος τὴν περίοδον ἐκόσμει, τῷ πάντων ἀγαθῶν δοτῆρι θεῷ ἀμφὶ τὸ μνῆμα τὸ σωτήριον εἰρήνης ἀνάθημα τὸ μαρτύριον βασιλέως ἀφιεροῦντος (*VC* 4.47).

[54] As Cameron and Hall point out in their note to 4.47, the symmetry is somewhat forced, and the impression of ecclesiastical harmony that Eusebius gives is very much distorted. Cameron and Hall find the cause of this distortion in Eusebius' desire to influence the sons of Constantine in favor of his own pro-Arian stance (p. 329).

[55] When contrasting the two councils as associated with victory and with peace respectively, Eusebius declines to draw out a scholarly religious allusion to the supposed etymological connection of Jerusalem with the Hebrew שָׁלוֹם (shalom), "peace." Eusebius had made use of this idea at *DE* 6.25: "You would not be wrong to call the soul of every holy person, every friend of God...'Jerusalem,' in so far as such a soul has become tranquil and free of unruly passions. For 'Jerusalem' when translated means 'vision of peace.'" Οὐκ ἂν δὲ ἁμάρτοις τὴν παντὸς ἁγίου καὶ θεοφιλοῦς ψυχὴν...καθὸ...ἐν εὐσταθείᾳ καὶ γαλήνῃ παθῶν καθέστηκεν, Ἱερουσαλὴμ...ἀποκαλῶν· "ὅρασιν" γαρ "εἰρήνης" μεταληφθὲν τοὔνομα σημαίνει. It is hard to imagine that the opportunity for a similar play on words would escape his notice here; the fact that he emphasizes the association of Nicaea with victory but fails to mention the association of Jerusalem with peace in this parallel construction is a function of genre and intended audience (see Drake 1976, 46-60). (For the etymology, see *Dictionnaire de la Bible* (Vigouroux 1895-1912) and *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Buttrick 1962), *s.v.* Jerusalem).

The assembly at Jerusalem is the last major event described before the narrative of the end of Constantine's life, where the theme of Pentecost recurs for a third and final time.

> Each of these things [the events of Constantine's illness and baptism] happened at the time of the greatest feast, the most sacred and holy festival of Pentecost, which is honored with seven weeks and sealed with one day. It was during Pentecost, according to the divine writings, that the savior of the world was taken up into the heavens and the Holy Spirit descended to mankind. And it was during Pentecost that the emperor received these rewards. Then on the very last day – you would not go wrong in calling it the feast of feasts – at about the noon of the sun, he was taken up to his God....[56]

Here Eusebius puts the theme of Pentecost to a different use, exploiting its association not with ecumenism but with the ascension of Christ. Though the ascension (known as ἡ ἀνάληψις) would later in the fourth century begin to be celebrated on the fortieth day after Easter, in 337 it was still celebrated on Pentecost, the fiftieth day after Easter; given the tradition of imperial *consecratio*, it was inevitable that the emperor's death on the day of Pentecost should suggest to Eusebius a parallel between Christ and the emperor.[57] Eusebius goes out of his way to indicate a mimetic relationship between Constantine and Christ with the verbal echo ἀνάληψιν-ἀνελαμβάνετο (*cf. Acts* 1.11, οὗτος ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὁ ἀναλημφθεὶς ἀφ' ὑμῶν εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν). He also makes this event a kind of culmination of Constantine's mimesis of Moses: the phrase "at about the

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[56] Ἕκαστα δὲ τούτων ἐπὶ τῆς μεγίστης συνετελεῖτο ἑορτῆς, τῆς δὴ πανσέπτου καὶ παναγίας πεντηκοστῆς, ἑβδομάσι μὲν ἑπτὰ τετιμημένης μονάδι δ' ἐπισφραγιζομένης, καθ' ἣν τὴν εἰς οὐρανοὺς ἀνάληψιν τοῦ κοινοῦ σωτῆρος τήν τε τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος εἰς ἀνθρώπους κάθοδον γεγενῆσθαι λόγοι περιέχουσι θεῖοι. ἐν δὴ ταύτῃ τούτων ἀξιωθεὶς βασιλεύς, ἐπὶ τῆς ὑστάτης ἁπασῶν ἡμέρας, ἣν δὴ ἑορτὴν ἑορτῶν οὐκ ἄν τις διαμάρτοι καλῶν, ἀμφὶ μεσημβρινὰς ἡλίου ὥρας πρὸς τὸν αὐτοῦ θεὸν ἀνελαμβάνετο... (*VC* 4.64).

[57] See *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Kazhdan 1991) *s.v.* ascension; Lampe *s.v.* ἀνάληψις. For discussion of *consecratio* as it pertains to Constantine, see MacCormack 1981, 119-24.

noon of the sun," ἀμφὶ μεσημβρινὰς ἡλίου ὥρας, is repeated verbatim from the account of Constantine's original epiphany, his vision of the cross, which was analogous to Moses' encounter with God in the burning bush (*cf. VC* 1.28.2). With the passing of time Constantine's access to the divine has become synchronized to the Christian liturgical year: his final mystical experience begins on Easter, when he falls ill, and ends on Pentecost, which Eusebius calls "the feast of feasts." The Mosaic charisma that Eusebius attributed to Constantine in Book 1 has been fully Christianized. At the same time, Constantine's relationship to the festival of Pentecost, a recurrent theme of Books 3 and 4, has become progressively more spiritual: he has gone from being the creator and dedicator of a votive image of Pentecost, as he was described in the account of the council of Nicaea, to re-enacting Christ's ascension into the presence of God, a progression from (metaphorical) artistic mimesis to mystical mimesis that is in harmony with the hierarchy of mimesis that Eusebius presupposes in the speech on the cathedral at Tyre.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre

One of the remarkable elements of the allegorical interpretation of the cathedral at Tyre is the way in which Eusebius interprets not only the form of the finished building but also the process of building the church, which he says replicates the spiritual re-building of the church as a whole after the persecution. The same interest in process is evident in the account in *VC* of the building of the Church of the Holy

Sepulchre on the site of a cave that was identified as the tomb of Jesus. Eusebius begins this episode, which follows almost immediately after that of the council of Nicaea, by saying that the emperor, acting under divine inspiration, decided to make the place of Jesus' resurrection famous by building a house of prayer there (*VC* 3.25).[58] Next comes a lengthy explanation of the presence of a temple to Aphrodite on the site of Jesus' tomb.

> For at some time in the past impious men, or rather the entire race of demons working through them, made every effort to consign to darkness and oblivion the famous divine memorial of immortality where the angel from heaven, flashing with light, rolled away the stone from those whose minds had turned to stone. He announced the good news to the women, who had assumed that the living one was still among the dead, and he removed the stone of disbelief from their minds by giving them to understand that the one they sought was alive. It was this cave of salvation that some godless, impious men undertook to make vanish from among mankind, foolishly thinking that by doing so they could somehow hide the truth. It was a vast labor – they brought in earth from somewhere to cover up the whole site, then they raised it up higher and put down a layer of stones, hiding the divine cave somewhere beneath a great earthwork. Then, as if they had achieved their goal, on top of this pile of earth they fitted out a real tomb, a frightful one for the spirits of dead idols, a dark, enclosed chamber that they had built for the licentious demon of Aphrodite. And finally they offered foul sacrifices there on profane and polluted altars.[59]

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[58] Eusebius is somewhat cagey on the subject of how the site was identified. It is not clear whether he means the reader to understand that the discovery of the tomb was a completely unforeseen result of the destruction of a Hadrianic temple of Aphrodite or that Constantine ordered the demolition of the temple and the excavation of the ground beneath it in search of the tomb, presumably taking his cue from a local tradition about its location. Constantine did build his church on the site of a Hadrianic temple; it incorporated both a cave and a rock formation identified as Golgotha, the site of the crucifixion (see Walker 1990, 247-52). Taylor (1993, 134-42) argues that Constantine chose the site even though it actually conflicted with the Christian tradition of the location of Golgotha because it afforded him the chance to destroy a pagan temple while building a Christian church.

[59] ἄνδρες μὲν γάρ ποτε δυσσεβεῖς, μᾶλλον δὲ πᾶν τὸ δαιμόνων διὰ τούτων γένος, σπουδὴν ἔθεντο σκότῳ καὶ λήθῃ παραδοῦναι τὸ θεσπέσιον ἐκεῖνο τῆς ἀθανασίας μνῆμα, παρ' ᾧ φῶς ἐξαστράπτων ὁ καταβὰς οὐρανόθεν ἄγγελος ἀπεκύλισε τὸν λίθον τῶν τὰς διανοίας λελιθωμένων καὶ τὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τῶν νεκρῶν ἔθ' ὑπάρχειν ὑπειληφότων, τὰς γυναῖκας εὐαγγελιζόμενος τόν τε τῆς ἀπιστίας λίθον τῆς αὐτῶν διανοίας ἐπὶ δόξῃ τῆς τοῦ ζητουμένου ζωῆς ἀφαιρούμενος. τοῦτο μὲν οὖν τὸ σωτήριον ἄντρον ἄθεοί τινες καὶ δυσσεβεῖς ἀφανὲς ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ποιήσασθαι διανενόηντο, ἄφρονι λογισμῷ τὴν ἀλήθειαν ταύτῃ πη κρύψαι

Eusebius begins by introducing the motif of light and darkness that will run throughout this episode: the builders of the temple, or rather the demons acting through them, wanted to consign to darkness the place that had been illuminated by the angel. He describes the stages of the process of building over the tomb: earth was brought in to fill the place; it was then leveled and paved; then the temple, which Eusebius with heavy irony describes as a real tomb for dead idols, was built; finally sacrifices were offered on the altars. The use of ἔπειτα and εἶτα to introduce each stage gives the reader a strong sense of the process of building. Next, after the section quoted above, he explains that the builders of the temple were bound to fail in their goal of covering up the proof of the resurrection; they might as well try to hide the sun. Nonetheless, he acknowledges, their efforts prevailed for many years, until "the friend of God" was chosen to overturn them (*VC* 3.26.5). Eusebius then describes the demolition of the temple and the excavation of the cave in such a way that the reader has a sense of the process of building running in reverse. The temple was demolished from its roof to its foundation; the materials were removed and disposed of; the foundation was dug up and disposed of; "one after another the underground layers were brought to light," ἕτερον ἀνθ' ἑτέρου στοιχεῖον ὁ κατὰ βάθους τῆς γῆς ἀνεφάνη χῶρος; and finally the cave was revealed (*VC* 3.26.7 – 3.28). Eusebius slows down the narrative and

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λογισάμενοι. καὶ δὴ πολὺν εἰσενεγκάμενοι μόχθον, γῆν ἔξωθέν ποθεν εἰσφορήσαντες τὸν πάντα καλύπτουσι τόπον, κἄπειτ' εἰς ὕψος αἰωρήσαντες λίθῳ τε καταστρώσαντες κάτω που τὸ θεῖον ἄντρον ὑπὸ πολλῷ τῷ χώματι κατακρύπτουσιν. εἶθ' ὡς οὐδενὸς αὐτοῖς λειπομένου, τῆς γῆς ὕπερθε δεινὸν ὡς ἀληθῶς ταφεῶνα ψυχῶν ἐπισκευάζουσι νεκρῶν εἰδώλων, σκότιον Ἀφροδίτης ἀκολάστῳ δαίμονι μυχὸν οἰκοδομησάμενοι, κἄπειτα μυσαρὰς ἐνταυθοῖ θυσίας ἐπὶ βεβήλων καὶ εναγῶν βωμῶν ἐπισπένδοντες (*VC* 3.26.1-3).

emphasizes the stages of the process with expressions such as "the emperor's enthusiasm did not give out at this point," οὐ μὴν δ' ἐν τούτοις τὰ τῆς σπουδῆς ἴστατο, and "he wasn't satisfied to go this far and no further," ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἐπὶ τοῦτο μόνον προελθεῖν ἀπήρκει (*VC* 3.27). Having thus portrayed in the narrative the mirrored processes of covering and building on the one hand and demolition and excavation on the other, he makes the point for which he has been preparing the reader: "To the cave, the holy of holies, it was granted to become an image of the savior's resurrection. For after descending into the darkness it came forth again into the light...," καὶ τό γε ἅγιον τῶν ἁγίων ἄντρον τὴν ὁμοίαν τῆς τοῦ σωτῆρος ἀναβιώσεως ἀπελάμβανεν εἰκόνα. διὸ μετὰ τὴν ἐν σκότῳ κατάδυσιν αὖθις ἐπὶ τὸ φῶς προήει (*VC* 3.28). The excavation ordered by the emperor has created an image of the resurrection by bringing the cave back from oblivion just as Christ returned from the realm of the dead. The importance that Eusebius attaches to this idea is evidenced by the care with which he presents it, shaping his narrative as just shown to depict the process of covering and uncovering. It is also apparent, from the emphasis that Eusebius places on the efforts of the builders of the temple of Aphrodite to cover up the truth and the desire of Constantine to destroy "the houses of error," τὰ τῆς πλάνης οἰκοδομήματα, that the excavation is to be understood as symbolic not only of Christ's triumph over death but of the triumph of Christianity over paganism (*VC* 3.26.7).

Next comes the account of re-building on the site (*VC* 3.29-40). Eusebius quotes Constantine's letter to Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem, giving instructions for the

process (*VC* 3.30-32). The letter is said to reveal Constantine's spiritual qualities: "his soul's intimacy with God and the purity of his faith in the word of salvation," τὸ φιλόθεον τῆς αὐτοῦ ψυχῆς τό τε καθαρὸν τῆς εἰς τὸν σωτήριον λόγον πίστεως (*VC* 3.29). Eusebius' resurrection analogy may be based on language in Constantine's letter; the emperor writes of the tomb as first "being hidden and unknown," κρυπτόμενον...λαθεῖν and then "shining out" ἀναλάμπειν (*VC* 30.1). What is particularly interesting about the letter, however, is that it expresses Constantine's firm conviction that the appropriate response to the discovery made during the destruction of the temple is for him to build a church there. His logic is as follows: the recent discovery,[60] a miracle too marvelous to describe in words, provides evidence of Christ's passion; with such evidence for the truth becoming more abundant, people should become more pious; and therefore, as everyone knows, the emperor is determined to "adorn the famous holy site...with the beauty of buildings," τὸν ἱερὸν ἐκεῖνον τόπον...οἰκοδομημάτων κάλλει κοσμήσωμεν (*VC* 3.30). The implication seems to be that the building of a church will both properly honor the site and promote piety.

Eusebius' description of the building complex follows the letter (*VC* 3.33-40). He does not supply an allegorical interpretation of the features of the building as in the speech on the cathedral at Tyre, although from his account of the dedication of the church at *VC* 4.45 it seems likely that at least one speech was made that involved

[60] Constantine never says precisely what was discovered, and there is considerable controversy as to whether he refers to the cave-tomb, the rock of Golgotha, or the "true cross." See Cameron and Hall *ad loc*. for discussion and bibliography.

allegorical interpretation of the building or its decoration.[61] This passage provides the outline for such an interpretation. The emphasis that Eusebius places on light and openness in the description of the building complex implicitly continues the interpretation of the excavation of the cave as symbolic of the resurrection, when "the angel from heaven, flashing with light, rolled away the stone from those whose minds had turned to stone..." (*VC* 3.26.1, *cf.* 3.33.3). Eusebius' description suggests that the emperor's building project gave a permanent physical form to the light and openness that came to the cave with the angel. The emperor caused the cave to "shine with all kinds of decoration," παντοίοις καλλωπίσμασι τὸ σεμνὸν ἄντρον φαιδρύνουσα (*VC* 3.34). The cave faced the rising sun and was at one end of "an enormous area that lay open to the clear sky," παμμεγέθη χῶρον εἰς καθαρὸν αἰθέρα ἀναπεπταμένον (*VC* 3.35-36.1). This courtyard was paved with "gleaming," λαμπρός, stone; the appearance of the exterior of the basilica on the other side of the courtyard is described as "glistening," λαμπρυνομένη, with its revetment of polished stone (*VC* 3.35-36.1). The ceiling of the basilica, which Eusebius compares to a "great sea," μέγα πέλαγος, "was entirely covered with radiant gold and made the whole church sparkle as with rays of light," χρυσῷ τε διαυγεῖ δι' ὅλου κεκαλλυμμένα φωτὸς οἷα μαρμαρυγαῖς τὸν πάντα νεὼν ἐξαστράπτειν ἐποίει (*VC* 3.36). The three doors at the eastern end of the basilica are described as "well situated toward the rising sun," πρός αὐτὸν

[61] This is the best explanation of Eusebius' statement that in an address to the assembly he "made visions of the prophets apply to the symbols that lay before them," καιρίους καὶ τοῖς προκειμένοις συμβόλοις τὰς προφητικὰς ποιούμενοι θεωρίας (*VC* 4.45.3). Grigg (1977) argued that Eusebius' speech offered interpretations of rituals, not artwork; Cameron and Hall reflect Grigg's view in translating σύμβολα as "symbolic rites."

ἀνίσχοντα ἥλιον εὖ διακείμεναι, and beyond these doors was another open courtyard with gates that allowed a clear view of the interior to those outside (*VC* 3.37, 39). "An enormous number of dedications of gold, silver, and precious stones," πλείστων ὅσων ἀναθημάτων χρυσοῦ καὶ ἀργύρου καὶ λίθων πολυτελῶν, add to the impression of brightness (*VC* 3.40). The constructed light and openness of the buildings replicate the angel's brightness and the opening of the sealed tomb.

The allegorical interpretation of the cathedral at Tyre gave the building an almost endlessly extended web of referents – the souls of individual believers, the local congregation, the Christian community, the hosts of heaven. Eusebius hints at the way in which an allegorical interpretation of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre could be extended when he compares the attempt to hide the proof of the resurrection with hiding the sun:

> These pathetic people could not comprehend that it would be contrary to nature for the one who was crowned for his victory over death to leave his great accomplishment hidden. The sun shining above the earth and driving his chariot on his accustomed course through the heaven would be as likely to escape the notice of the whole inhabited world! For the power of the savior, shining brighter than the sun not on the bodies but into the souls of human beings, was filling the whole world with the rays of his light.[62]

The brightness of the building replicates spiritual enlightenment, not only the enlightenment of the women who met the angel at the tomb but of the entire Christian community and the οἰκουμένη. As an image of enlightenment, furthermore, the church

[62] οὐ γὰρ οἷοί τ' ἦσαν συνιέναι οἱ δείλαιοι, ὡς οὐκ εἶχε φύσιν τὸν κατὰ τοῦ θανάτου βραβεῖα ἀναδησάμενον κρύφιον καταλιπεῖν τὸ κατόρθωμα, οὐδὲ τὴν σύμπασαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων οἰκουμένην λαθεῖν λάμπων ὑπὲρ γῆς γενόμενος ὁ ἥλιος καὶ τὸν οἰκεῖον ἐν οὐρανῷ διιππεύων δρόμον· τούτου γὰρ κρειττόνως ψυχὰς ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ' οὐ σώματα ἡ σωτήριος καταυγάζουσα δύναμις τῶν οἰκείων τοῦ φωτὸς μαρμαρυγῶν τὸν σύμπαντα κατεπλήρου κόσμον (*VC* 3.26.4).

building is not meant to stand apart from the viewer for analysis or even admiration, but rather to draw him into an experience of enlightenment. Eusebius' mention of people outside looking in at *VC* 3.39 is reminiscent of the women at the tomb and suggests a continual re-enactment of the original Easter morning scene.[63] The spiritual light that Constantine has represented in physical form can thus be replicated again and again in the souls of visitors to the church.

One striking aspect of Eusebius' description of the church is that it traces a path from the inside out. Unlike Pausanias, who often takes his readers to the outer edges of a sacred space but declines to reveal, or is himself denied access to, the secrets within, Eusebius begins from the inner sanctum and moves outward.[64] He takes his reader from the cave through the surrounding courtyard, into the adjoining basilica, through the basilica into another courtyard, and finally to the entrance gates. He uses two different devices to accomplish this progression from the inside out. He begins by framing the description according to the order in which the buildings were constructed, saying that Constantine first beautified the cave (he uses the expression "first, like the head of the whole" twice, with a slight variation) and then went on (διέβαινε δ' ἐξῆς) to the open courtyard leading to the basilica (*VC* 3.33-35). After describing the basilica he adopts another device, that of taking the point of view of a person walking from the basilica to

[63] The arrival of the women at the tomb is depicted in one of the large frescoes in the house-church at Dura Europos, dating to the first half of the third century (see Weitzmann 1979, 404-5; Grabar 1968b, pp. 68-71 and plate 59). Given the limited number of scenes employed in early Christian art, it is tempting to speculate that it may have been depicted somewhere in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and that Eusebius' allegorical reference to "the stone of disbelief" at *VC* 3.26.2 alluded to it.
[64] *E.g* Pausanius 1.38.7 (Eleusis), 2.35.8 (a temple of Demeter at Hermione), 2.35.11 (a temple of Eileithyia at Hermione). For discussion see Elsner 1995, 144-6.

the outer courtyard: "those going forward from there to the entrances at the front of the church encountered another open space," ἔνθεν δὲ προϊόντων ἐπὶ τὰς πρὸ τοῦ νεὼ κειμένας εἰσόδους αἴθριον διελάμβανεν ἄλλο (*VC* 3.39). The sense of an inside-out progression from the inmost and holiest part of the building all the way to the street is very strong, and the reader is thus led on a sort of reverse pilgrimage. Along the way he twice encounters people headed in the other direction, toward the inner space: the doors to the basilica "received the crowds that streamed in," τὰ πλήθη τῶν εἴσω φερομένων ὑπεδέχοντο, and the outer gates "provided those walking by outside an astounding view of the sights within," τοῖς τὴν ἐκτὸς πορείαν ποιουμένοις καταπληκτικὴν παρεῖχον τὴν τῶν ἔνδον ὁρωμένων θέαν (*VC* 3.37, 39). The building would of course normally be experienced from the point of view of these people, as a progression through increasingly sacred spaces or a glimpse from the street, but Eusebius, though he hints at this typical pilgrim experience, chooses to take the opposite point of view. By orienting the reader's mental gaze from the cave outward Eusebius has given his description the same sort of "reverse perspective" that Grabar analyzes as conducive to mystical viewing in late antique art (see pp.135-6 *supra*). The reader, looking out from the most sacred part of the building complex and encountering others looking in, is invited to assimilate himself to the angel, the announcer of the good news, and to Constantine, who, also proceeding in the correct inside-out direction, has built the complex to perpetuate the angel's message.

The step-by-step account of the church complex beginning from the cave adds the final stage to the process that Eusebius has been describing: the tomb was covered over and the temple built; the temple was then demolished and the tomb uncovered; finally the tomb is beautified and then carefully enclosed in a building that marks it off as sacred and at the same time makes it accessible. Constantine's building is presented as the perfect response to the error made by the builders of the temple: he has not just preserved the tomb but enhanced it in such a way that its "testimony" (Eusebius uses the word μαρτύριον three times in this passage) to spiritual truth is amplified. Eusebius clearly espouses in this passage the logic of Constantine's letter: the discovery of Christ's tomb ideally leads to the construction of a beautiful building on the site. The process of demolition and excavation provided a likeness of Christ's triumph over death and of the triumph of Christianity over paganism; the completed church building, which enshrines the cave and fills and surrounds it with light, constitutes a permanent image of the resurrection and a site at which the Easter experience can continually be re-enacted.

Eusebius suggests another mimetic relationship by calling the church "new Jerusalem":

> No sooner were the emperor's orders issued in words than they began to be accomplished in deeds, and at the site of the testimony to salvation work was begun on the new Jerusalem, facing the one that was celebrated in former times. The old city, defiled by the murder of the Lord, paid the penalty required of its wicked inhabitants when it suffered complete devastation. It was opposite this that the emperor raised up the savior's victory over death, a rich, lavish, extravagant foundation that may perhaps be that new Jerusalem that was announced in the oracles of the prophets....[65]

[65] ἅμα δὲ λόγῳ δι' ἔργων ἐχώρει τὰ προστεταγμένα, καὶ δὴ κατ' αὐτὸ τὸ σωτήριον μαρτύριον ἡ νέα κατεσκευάζετο Ἰερουσαλήμ, ἀντιπρόσωπος τῇ πάλαι βοωμένῃ, ἣ μετὰ τὴν κυριοκτόνον

The allusion is to the fabulous eschatological vision in the final chapters of *Revelation* of a new and perfect version of the old world, which has been destroyed. In the new world the city of Jerusalem has no need of the temple and its cult, because of God's immanent presence (*Revelation* 21.1-5, 22.22-23). Eusebius suggests that Constantine's church, built outside the border of the biblical Jerusalem, fulfills the prophecy and is the new and perfect version of the old Jerusalem.[66]

Here Eusebius adapts an argument that he had developed in *DE*, several years before the discovery of the tomb of Christ, about the presence of a Christian meeting place on the Mount of Olives.

> When it says, "And his feet will stand in that day on the Mount of Olives which is opposite Jerusalem to the east" (*Zechariah* 14.4), what can the meaning be other than that the Lord God, the Word of God himself, stands firmly on his church, which in this case is allegorically called the Mount of Olives? [Eusebius justifies with other scripture references the interpretation of the Mount of Olives as the church.] And this Mount of Olives is said to be opposite (κατέναντι) Jerusalem because it was founded by God instead of (ἀντί) the old earthly Jerusalem and the cult practiced there after the overthrow of Jerusalem....The prophet Ezekiel, inspired by the Holy Spirit, also foretells this [the departure of God and the faithful from Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives]. For he says, "And the cherubim rose up, with the wheels that were beside them. And the glory of the God of Israel was upon them, above them, and the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city and stood upon the mountain that was opposite the city" (*Ezekiel* 11.22). In our own time we can see this literally fulfilled in another way, as all those who trust in Christ converge from all over the earth, not as in ancient times because of the glory of Jerusalem, nor to worship in the holy place that was established in Jerusalem long ago. Instead they sojourn there

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μιαιφονίαν ἐρημίας ἐπ' ἔσχατα περιτραπεῖσα δίκην ἔτισε δυσσεβῶν οἰκητόρων. ταύτης δ' οὖν ἄντικρυς βασιλεὺς τὴν κατὰ τοῦ θανάτου σωτήριον νίκην πλουσίαις καὶ δαψιλέσιν ἀνύψου φιλοτιμίαις, τάχα που ταύτην οὖσαν τὴν διὰ προφητικῶν θεσπισμάτων κεκηρυγμένην καινὴν καὶ νέαν Ἰερουσαλήμ... (*VC* 3.33.1-2).

[66] The diffidence Eusebius expresses with "perhaps," τάχα που, the second time he refers to "new Jerusalem" is typical of his treatment of biblical concepts in *VC* (see p.45, n.67 and p.148, n.55 *supra*).

> for two purposes: to learn about the defeat and devastation of Jerusalem, which happened just as it was foretold, and to worship on the Mount of Olives opposite Jerusalem, where the glory of the Lord took up a new position upon leaving the old city. For truly, as the literal and straightforward account tells us, the feet of our Lord and savior, the Word Himself in that mortal tabernacle that he took up, stood on the Mount of Olives just by the cave that is pointed out there. When he had prayed and had taught his disciples the mysteries of the end times on the ridge of the Mount of Olives, he ascended from there into the heavens....[67]

In this passage the tradition of the presence of the resurrected Christ on the Mount of Olives "opposite the city" and the subsequent use of the site for Christian worship, together with the destruction of the Jewish temple, are made to signify a transfer of God's favor from Jews to Christians. It is fascinating to see the flexibility with which Eusebius re-deploys these ideas in *VC*. The theme of God's desertion of the Jews is a very important one in Eusebius' theological writings, and it is not surprising that he should bring it into his discussion of Constantine's Holy Land building program. The account of the building of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is followed by an account of Helena's foundation of the Church of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives (*VC*

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[67] Τὸ δὲ, "καὶ στήσονται οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος τῶν ἐλαιῶν, τὸ κατέναντι Ἰερουσαλὴμ ἐξ ἀνατολῶν," τί ἕτερον δηλοῖ ἢ κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ, αὐτοῦ δὴ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου, τὴν ἐπὶ τῆς ἐκκλησίας αὐτοῦ στάσιν τε καὶ βεβαίωσιν, ἣν ὄρος ἐλαιῶν ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος κατὰ τρόπον ἀλληγορίας ὀνομάζει;...τοῦτο δὲ τὸ τῶν ἐλαιῶν ὄρος κατέναντι τῆς Ἰερουσαλὴμ εἶναι λέλεκται· ἐπειδή περ ἀντὶ τῆς παλαιᾶς ἐπιγείου Ἰερουσαλὴμ καὶ τῆς ἐν αὐτῇ θρησκείας συνέστη τῷ θεῷ μετὰ τὴν τῆς Ἰερουσαλὴμ καθαίρεσιν...τοῦτο δὲ καὶ ὁ προφήτης Ἰεζεκιὴλ τῷ θείῳ πνεύματι προλαβὼν θεωρεῖ. λέγει δὲ οὖν· "καὶ ἐξῆρε τὰ χερουβὶμ, καὶ οἱ τροχοὶ ἐχόμενοι αυτῶν· καὶ ἡ δόξα θεοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ἦν ἐπ' αὐτοῖς, ὑπεράνω αὐτῶν, καὶ ἀνέβη ἡ δόξα κυρίου ἐκ μέσου τῆς πόλεως, καὶ ἔστη ἐπὶ τοῦ ὄρους ὃ ἦν ἀπέναντι τῆς πόλεως." ὅπερ ἔστι καὶ ἄλλως πρὸς λέξιν ὁρᾶν πεπληρωμένον εἰσέτι καὶ σήμερον, τῶν εἰς Χριστὸν πεπιστευκότων ἁπάντων πανταχόθεν γῆς συντρεχόντων, οὐχ ὡς πάλαι τῆς κατὰ τὴν Ἰερουσαλὴμ ἀγλαΐας ἕνεκα, οὐδ' ὥστε προσκυνῆσαι ἐν τῷ πάλαι συνεστῶτι ἐπὶ τῆς Ἰερουσαλὴμ ἁγιάσματι, καταλύειν δὲ ἕνεκεν ἱστορίας τε ὁμοῦ τῆς κατὰ τὴν προφητείαν ἁλώσεως καὶ ἐρημίας τῆς Ἰερουσαλὴμ, καὶ τῆς ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος τῶν ἐλαιῶν τὸ κατέναντι Ἰερουσαλὴμ προσκυνήσεως, ἔνθα ἡ δόξα κυρίου μετέστη καταλείψασα τὴν προτέραν πόλιν. ἔστησαν δὲ ἀληθῶς καὶ κατὰ τὴν πρόχειρον καὶ ῥητὴν διήγησιν οἱ πόδες τοῦ κυρίου καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν, αὐτοῦ δὴ τοῦ λόγου, δι' οὗ ἀνείληφεν ἀνθρωπείου σκήνους, ἐπὶ τοῦ ὄρους τῶν ἐλαιῶν πρὸς τῷ αὐτόθι δεικνυμένῳ σπηλαίῳ, εὐξαμένου τε καὶ τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ μαθηταῖς ἐπὶ τῆς ἀκρωρείας τοῦ τῶν ἐλαιῶν ὄρους τὰ περὶ τῆς συντελείας μυστήρια παραδεδωκότος, ἐντεῦθέν τε τὴν εἰς οὐρανοὺς ἄνοδον πεποιημένου... (*DE* 6.18).

3.41-43), which would have allowed him to reiterate the argument from *DE*. But he prefers to associate this key concept with the Church of the Sepulchre, perhaps for the simple reason that this church is more closely associated with Constantine and so merits greater emphasis in an account of his life. To do so he makes use of a different prophecy, calling the church the new Jerusalem. But he retains from various scriptural references to the Mount of Olives the idea that the new site of God's favor is "opposite" and "facing" the old Jerusalem, something that is not said of the new Jerusalem in *Revelation* but is still pertinent to the topography.[68]

It has been argued that Eusebius, committed to a purely spiritual understanding of Christianity, remained doggedly opposed to the process of "sacralization of place"

[68] In the account of Helena's endowing a church on the Mount of Olives there is no mention of the prophecies cited in *DE* or of the transfer of God's favor. But the motif of the feet of Christ standing on the Mount of Olives, which is so prevalent in the *DE* passage, is retained in a slightly different form in the paragraph that introduces Helena's Holy Land activities: "As she paid due worship to the savior's footsteps, following the prophetic word that says, 'Let us worship in the place where his feet stood' (*Psalm* 131(132).7), she then and there established a legacy, the fruit of her own piety, for the benefit of future generations. For she immediately consecrated to the God whom she worshipped two churches, one near the cave of his birth and the other on the mountain of his ascension." ὡς δὲ τοῖς βήμασι τοῖς σωτηρίοις τὴν πρέπουσαν ἀπεδίδου προσκύνησιν, ἀκολούθως προφητικῷ λόγῳ, φάντι "προσκυνήσωμεν εἰς τὸν τόπον, οὗ ἔστησαν οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ," τῆς οἰκείας εὐσεβείας καρπὸν καὶ τοῖς μετέπειτα παραχρῆμα κατελίμπανεν. Αὐτίκα δ' οὖν τῷ προσκυνηθέντι θεῷ δύο νεὼς ἀφιέρου, τὸν μὲν πρὸ τῷ τῆς γεννήσεως ἄντρῳ, τὸν δ' ἐπὶ τοῦ τῆς ἀναλήψεως ὄρους (*VC* 3.42.2-43.1). In the first years of the fifth century Paulinus of Nola, describing the basilica commissioned by Helena on the Mount of Olives, writes that the footprints left by Christ at the spot from which he ascended had miraculously resisted being paved over and could still be seen inside the building; he also quotes the verse from *Psalm* 131 ("Mirum vero inter haec, quod in basilica ascensionis locus ille tantum de quo in nube susceptus ascendit...ita sacratus divinis vestigiis dicitur, ut numquam tegi marmore aut paviri receperit....Itaque in toto basilicae spatio solus in sui cespitis specie virens permanet...ut vere dici posset, 'adoravimus ubi steterunt pedes eius,'" *Epistulae* 31.4). It is possible that Eusebius' references to footsteps in this passage are an oblique reference to the same. The question is complicated by the fact that purported footprints of Christ are still preserved on a stone in the Mosque of the Ascension, which is built on the site not of Helena's basilica but of a round church built later in the fourth century (see Taylor 1993, 152).

that gathered so much momentum in Constantinian Palestine.[69] This position reflects the same presuppositions about the corrupting influence of Hellenization on a pure Christianity as the view, lately called into question, of Christian attitudes toward pictorial art that was outlined above (p.110ff.). If Eusebius held such convictions, he certainly does not reveal them in *VC*. His description of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is a sketch for a full-scale allegorical treatise like the speech on the cathedral at Tyre. The connections are not so explicitly drawn in the *VC* passage, but there is a clear sense of an essential link between the spiritual realm and all the mundane phenomena associated with the site of the church complex – the cave and the events of the resurrection; the history of building, demolition, and re-building on the site; the form and function of the church; and its location in proximity to the ruined Jewish temple. Eusebius has created a self-interpreting image that presents the church building as visible evidence of spiritual realities and as a site for endlessly replicating spiritual experience.

[69] This is one thesis of Peter Walker's very erudite book on the attitudes of Eusebius and of Cyril of Jerusalem toward the new Holy Land foundations; see Walker 1990, esp. 22-31. Robert Wilken has convincingly argued against this approach; see p.125, n.17 *supra*.

EPILOGUE

One result of the foregoing study should be a clearer view of *VC* as a unified literary work. As far as genre is concerned, *VC* is clearly a hybrid, with traits of panegyric, Plutarchan biography, and document-based history. But it has its own kind of unity. Eusebius' goal was a biography that would be not just ethically edifying but spiritually revelatory. Documents, narrative, *ekphraseis*, *synkriseis* – any element of the text could be a window onto reality of a higher order. A political event might be the just and providential activity of the God of the universe, and almost any piece of information about the emperor – or any document from his hand – might reveal his immortal, god-like soul. Constantine, according to Eusebius, had access to supra-mundane reality through dreams, visions, miracles, and sheer piety and wisdom; if the ordinary citizen is not so fortunate, he has a kind of second-hand access through the memory of Constantine's pious life, the effects of policies that he instituted to promote true religion, and the artifacts such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre that he created to give a physical form to spiritual truth. The text of *VC* is meant to make all of these things perpetually available, together with Eusebius' authoritative interpretation of them.

Understanding of Eusebius' symbolic view of the world should enable us to avoid some pitfalls in reading *VC*. When objects in the material world are viewed as symbols of unseen realities, and when the author's role is to open the reader's eyes to

those realities, shortcuts get taken. Instead of describing a material phenomenon as it is normally perceived, Eusebius may travel a step or two up the mimetic ladder and borrow language associated with a prototype of the phenomenon. This is true on a large scale for the portrayal of Constantine as a philosopher that was outlined in Chapter Two. In late antiquity it was not the emperor but the philosopher who was considered to have the most nearly god-like soul, so Constantine's portrait is given the features of the philosopher not because he was a philosopher but to communicate to the reader Eusebius' image of him as a paragon of spiritual maturity. Eusebius' references to the "saving sign" may constitute another such shortcut. Barring archaeological discovery, we will never know whether the "saving sign above the emperor's head" in the painting above the palace gate was a chi-rho, a cross, a battle standard, or something else entirely. The same is true of the "saving sign in the form of a cross" that Eusebius says was in the hand of the emperor's statue in Rome. Commentators often assume that Eusebius refers in these passages to something that is unambiguously recognizable as a cross, but this need not be the case. Justin Martyr, an apologist of the second century, had analyzed battle standards as symbols of the cross; for him the cross-like shape of the *vexillum* was not a trivial coincidence but a profoundly meaningful symbol of the power and authority of Christ over the affairs even of emperors (see p.138, n.41 *supra*). Eusebius, whose eye for the symbolic was as well developed as Justin's, may be following the same line of thought, using the decorous allusiveness of panegyric to his

advantage in describing the *vexillum* as a "saving sign" so that its symbolic relationship to the cross is foregrounded.

For Eusebius, ever the pastor, spiritual revelation leads inexorably to ethical improvement. The reader of *VC* is invited to undertake *imitatio Constantini*. I will cite a final example from the text. At *VC* 4.14.2-22.1 Eusebius describes Constantine's habits with regard to prayer and his attempts to encourage his subjects to pray, in particular to pray for him. Eusebius first teaches the reader to interpret certain official portraits in coin types and sculpture: they reveal the faith in the emperor's soul in that they show him looking up to heaven in prayer (*VC* 4.15.1). Then, Pygmalion-style, the reader sees the images brought to life as Eusebius tells how Constantine led his household and soldiers in prayer and engaged in private prayer (4.17-22.1). The soldiers were taught to "direct their mind's eye upward toward the heavenly ruler" (ἀνωτάτω δ' ἐπὶ τὸν οὐράνιον βασιλέα τοὺς τῆς διανοίας παραπέμποντας ὀφθαλμούς) by the philosopher-emperor in person. The people of the empire might follow the lead of the official portraits, provided they knew how to interpret them, and Eusebius' verbal portrait provided the interpretive key.

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Abbreviations

ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1972- ____.
DE	Eusebius, *Demonstratio Evangelica*.
De Iside	Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*.
Ep. Const.	Eusebius, *Epistula ad Constantiam Augustam, PG* edition.
GCS	*Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten (drei) Jahrhunderte*. Leipzig and Berlin, 1891- ____.
HE	Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica.*
LC	Eusebius, *De Laudibus Constantini*.
LCL	Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1911- ____.
Lampe	G. W. H. Lampe ed., *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961.
PE	Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*.
PG	J.-P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca*. Paris, 1857–1866.
RAC	Theodor Klauser *et al*., eds., *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum: Sachwörterbuch zur Auseinandersetzung des Christentums mit der antiken Welt*. Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1950- ____.
SC	*Sources Chrétiennes*. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1942- ____.
VC	Eusebius, *De Vita Constantini*.

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